

<p>1 Monday, 11 June 2012</p> <p>2 (10.00 am)</p> <p>3 (Proceedings delayed)</p> <p>4 (10.15 am)</p> <p>5 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I am today handing down rulings in</p> <p>6 relation to the application made concerning Operation</p> <p>7 Motorman and in relation to costs.</p> <p>8 When this Inquiry was established last July, it was</p> <p>9 extremely important that it had the benefit of</p> <p>10 cross-party support and it is equally important that it</p> <p>11 conducts its work so as not to undermine the basis upon</p> <p>12 which it was established.</p> <p>13 Two weeks ago, the former Prime Minister,</p> <p>14 Mr Tony Blair, gave evidence. This week, I shall be</p> <p>15 hearing from others who are or who have been the leading</p> <p>16 politicians of the day. They come from different</p> <p>17 parties, with different political allegiances, and</p> <p>18 already there has been demonstrated intense public</p> <p>19 interest in what they will be asked and what they will</p> <p>20 have to say.</p> <p>21 It is vital to bear in mind that the Inquiry is</p> <p>22 grounded in the terms of reference announced when it was</p> <p>23 set up. These include:</p> <p>24 "1. To enquire into the culture, practice and</p> <p>25 ethics of the press, including (a) contacts and the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 1</p>	<p>1 and journalists have treated politics and politicians in</p> <p>2 ways that are designed to keep or have the effect of</p> <p>3 keeping the press insulated from criticism, from being</p> <p>4 held accountable by anyone, so as to ensure that there</p> <p>5 is no political will to challenge their culture,</p> <p>6 practices or ethics.</p> <p>7 To be more specific, the purpose of this Inquiry is</p> <p>8 not to challenge the present government or the decisions</p> <p>9 taken in the recent past, but to look at the much wider</p> <p>10 sweep of history across party political boundaries in</p> <p>11 order to discern any patterns of behaviour that could</p> <p>12 not be recognised as fitting with the open, fair and</p> <p>13 transparent decision-making that our democracy requires.</p> <p>14 Inevitably, as I've already explained, the way in</p> <p>15 which the BSkyB bid was addressed is a small but</p> <p>16 significant part of the story. To the extent that there</p> <p>17 are political questions that Parliament wishes to</p> <p>18 investigate, I repeat that nothing I say or do is</p> <p>19 intended to limit or prevent that investigation from</p> <p>20 taking place. I do hope, however, that it will be</p> <p>21 appreciated that this issue is merely the most recent</p> <p>22 example of interplay between politicians and the press,</p> <p>23 and that it will be recognised by everyone that failure</p> <p>24 to address the impact of press behaviour or the</p> <p>25 consequences of press interests is not confined to one</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 3</p>
<p>1 relationships between national newspapers and</p> <p>2 politicians and the conduct of each ..."</p> <p>3 And 2:</p> <p>4 "To make recommendations ... (b) for how future</p> <p>5 concerns about press behaviour, media policy, regulation</p> <p>6 and cross-media ownership should be dealt with by all</p> <p>7 the relevant authorities, including, among others, the</p> <p>8 government; (c) as to the future conduct of relations</p> <p>9 between politicians and the press."</p> <p>10 The present focus is on the press and its</p> <p>11 relationship with politicians. I am specifically not</p> <p>12 concerned and am very keen to avoid inter-party politics</p> <p>13 and the politics of personality. I am simply not</p> <p>14 interested in either.</p> <p>15 Further, however much some might want me to</p> <p>16 investigate all manner of issues, I know that all of</p> <p>17 this week's witnesses are equally keen to ensure that</p> <p>18 the Inquiry itself remains on its correct track. That</p> <p>19 track relates not only to the undeniable importance of</p> <p>20 the role of the press in a democratic society and the</p> <p>21 ways in which the press serve the public interest, but</p> <p>22 also the privileges that are claimed as a consequence in</p> <p>23 the way in which that role is fulfilled in practice.</p> <p>24 It also relates to the other side of the coin, which</p> <p>25 is the extent, if at all, to which proprietors, editors</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 2</p>	<p>1 government or one political party. For that reason, it</p> <p>2 remains essential that cross party support for this</p> <p>3 Inquiry is not jeopardised much.</p> <p>4 So far as the terms of reference are concerned, in</p> <p>5 the same way that I recognised in Module 2 that there</p> <p>6 are bound to be entirely acceptable social and</p> <p>7 professional relationships between police officers and</p> <p>8 journalists, so my aim for this module is first to</p> <p>9 recognise that there are entirely appropriate social</p> <p>10 relationships between politicians and journalists,</p> <p>11 doubtless borne of friendship and equally entirely</p> <p>12 appropriate professional relationships between</p> <p>13 politicians and journalists as the former seek to</p> <p>14 promote their policies and their message while the</p> <p>15 latter seek to ensure that politicians and their</p> <p>16 policies are held fully and properly to account.</p> <p>17 Secondly, it is also to recognise the risk that in an</p> <p>18 effort to keep the press onside, supporting promoted</p> <p>19 policies that are firmly believed to be in the public</p> <p>20 interest, rather too much attention may be paid by</p> <p>21 governments to the power that the press can exercise</p> <p>22 pursuing its own agenda, particularly where that agenda</p> <p>23 is agreed by the entire press or at least a significant</p> <p>24 powerful section of it. That might include questions</p> <p>25 relating to the provision of redress, particularly for</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 4</p>

<p>1 the weakest in our society.</p> <p>2 In that regard, I anticipate questions will be asked</p> <p>3 about the draft criteria for a solution which has been</p> <p>4 published on the Inquiry website, not to commit any of</p> <p>5 the party leaders giving evidence but rather to hear</p> <p>6 their perspective on the problems to be addressed in</p> <p>7 relation to problems culture, practices and ethics of</p> <p>8 the press and in relation to any unintended consequences</p> <p>9 which they have spotted but I may not have considered.</p> <p>10 Nothing I say shall be taken as expressing any concluded</p> <p>11 opinion: testing ideas with witnesses is doing no more</p> <p>12 than testing ideas.</p> <p>13 I add only this. It may be more interesting for</p> <p>14 some to report this Inquiry by reference to the politics</p> <p>15 of personality or the impact of the evidence on current</p> <p>16 political issues. That is not my focus, and as ever,</p> <p>17 I'll be paying attention to the way in which what</p> <p>18 transpires is in fact reported. This week will not</p> <p>19 conclude the evidence for Module 3, although we will not</p> <p>20 be sitting next week, thereafter it is intended to call</p> <p>21 further witnesses from the media to deal with the</p> <p>22 relationship between the press and politicians, not</p> <p>23 least to see if, in their perception, there are issues</p> <p>24 that need to be resolved and changes made.</p> <p>25 We will then turn to Module 4, which concerns ways</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 5</p>	<p>1 MR DAVIES: It's simply this. We would like to see the</p> <p>2 questions which those -- which some of the witnesses are</p> <p>3 answering in the cases where they have not quoted the</p> <p>4 questions in their witness statements. What has</p> <p>5 happened is this: most of the witnesses who have given</p> <p>6 evidence recently have been responding to Section 21</p> <p>7 notices from the Tribunal. Most of them have chosen to</p> <p>8 set out the questions in their witness statements and</p> <p>9 then to answer them. In one or two cases, I think they</p> <p>10 have exhibited the Inquiry's notice. In either case,</p> <p>11 one can see exactly the question being answered and</p> <p>12 relate the answer to the question.</p> <p>13 However, there have been a handful of cases where</p> <p>14 the witnesses have chosen to answer the questions</p> <p>15 without setting them out or exhibiting them. That is no</p> <p>16 criticism at all of the witness, but it does make it</p> <p>17 very difficult for those seeking to understand in detail</p> <p>18 what their evidence is to reach a full appreciation of</p> <p>19 it.</p> <p>20 A particular example of this was in fact Mr Blair,</p> <p>21 whose statement has a heading, "Turning to the</p> <p>22 particular questions", which then runs on for several</p> <p>23 pages, but he doesn't set them out and he says things</p> <p>24 such as, "I do not recognise any of the quotes I have</p> <p>25 been asked about", so we don't know what they are.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 7</p>
<p>1 forward for the future. During the course of that</p> <p>2 module, I look forward to hearing how the industry has</p> <p>3 progressed with the plans that Lord Hunt outlined as</p> <p>4 long ago as 31 January 2012. I also look forward to</p> <p>5 considering the various other suggestions for the</p> <p>6 replacement of the PCC that have been submitted in</p> <p>7 detail to the Inquiry. It was on 17 May that I sought</p> <p>8 to provide some assistance for those intending to make</p> <p>9 submissions by publishing on the Inquiry website what</p> <p>10 are possible or potential draft criteria for an</p> <p>11 effective regulatory regime -- that is why they are</p> <p>12 called draft -- along with some key questions for</p> <p>13 Module 4, relating to public interest and press ethics.</p> <p>14 The purpose of doing so has been and remains to</p> <p>15 encourage everyone to consider the issues that I must</p> <p>16 think about and to welcome comments and suggestions.</p> <p>17 I repeat that I retain an open mind as to the</p> <p>18 future. All ideas will be subject to scrutiny and</p> <p>19 I have no doubt will help to inform the conclusions that</p> <p>20 I reach and the recommendations that I ultimately make.</p> <p>21 Thank you.</p> <p>22 I'm sorry for the delay in commencing the</p> <p>23 proceedings.</p> <p>24 MR DAVIES: Might I raise a point, sir?</p> <p>25 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 6</p>	<p>1 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: All right, I understand that.</p> <p>2 MR DAVIES: We've been in correspondence with the Inquiry</p> <p>3 about this and the answer we've received is that</p> <p>4 correspondence -- the Inquiry's correspondence with</p> <p>5 witnesses is confidential. Now, it does appear to us</p> <p>6 that that simply cannot apply in this instance, and</p> <p>7 given that the vast majority of witnesses have set out</p> <p>8 the questions their answering, there can't be anything</p> <p>9 confidential in the remaining cases.</p> <p>10 And there arises to a lesser extent but also with</p> <p>11 Mr Brown, whose evidence we're about to hear, so we</p> <p>12 would ask for the questions in those two matters and any</p> <p>13 others where it arises.</p> <p>14 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: All right, thank you.</p> <p>15 MR CAPLAN: Might I just support that, please.</p> <p>16 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes.</p> <p>17 MR JAY: I'll think about it and come back to you at</p> <p>18 a convenient moment.</p> <p>19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Very good, thank you very much.</p> <p>20 Right.</p> <p>21 MR JAY: Sir, may I call this morning's witness, the Right</p> <p>22 Honourable Gordon Brown, please.</p> <p>23 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Thank you very much.</p> <p>24 MR GORDON BROWN (sworn)</p> <p>25 Questions by MR JAY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 8</p>

2 (Pages 5 to 8)

1 MR JAY: Mr Brown, your full name, please?
 2 **A. James Gordon Brown.**
 3 Q. You've provided us with a witness statement dated 30 May
 4 2012. It has the standard statement of truth and you've
 5 signed it. Is this your formal evidence to our Inquiry?
 6 **A. Yes, it is.**
 7 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Mr Brown, thank you very much for the
 8 work that's obviously gone into the Inquiry. I'm sorry
 9 that our start this morning has been slightly delayed.
 10 **A. It's fine by me. Thank you very much,**
 11 **Lord Justice Leveson.**
 12 MR JAY: Mr Brown, may we start your general comments, which
 13 I'm going to ask you to elaborate. On the bottom of the
 14 first page of your statement, our page 14207, you refer
 15 to securing the right balance between the freedoms of
 16 the media and the privacy of the citizen. Implicit in
 17 that is the premise that there is an imbalance at
 18 present, but how do you rectify the imbalance without
 19 impinging on the freedoms of the media?
 20 **A. I think the starting point of all this has been the cri**
 21 **de coeur, if you like, the complaint that has been made**
 22 **by a family like the Dowler family, and they would**
 23 **support, I have no doubt, the freedom of the press, but**
 24 **they're worried about the threat that was made to their**
 25 **privacy as individuals, and I think Lord Justice Leveson**

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1 put it: who will guard the guardians? was a question
 2 which he wanted to address. I will say: who will defend
 3 the defenceless? We have to provide answers in
 4 a situation where we have two freedoms that are
 5 competing with each other.
 6 Perhaps I've had some time to reflect on these
 7 matters. You might call it a period of enforced
 8 reflection courtesy of the British people, but I've had
 9 a chance to look at some of these issues, and I would
 10 still hold to the view that really came from my
 11 religious upbringing, that the media, one of those
 12 institutions in society that have not only a right but
 13 a duty to speak truth to power, that they should
 14 continue to shine a torch on those dark secret recesses
 15 of unaccountable power and that, for example, in the
 16 great Sunday Times campaign on the thalidomide was
 17 proven to be the right thing to do.
 18 I would say that at its best, the media in this
 19 country is indeed also the best in the world, and
 20 I would defend the right of the media to exercise
 21 a freedom, even when there is a political bias.
 22 I was phoned up by a prime minister during the
 23 period I was in Number 10 when he was having great
 24 trouble with his other colleagues around Europe, and
 25 he -- I said, "Is there anything I can do to help?" and

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1 he said, "Yes, there is", and the next day the editor of
 2 the best-selling daily newspaper in this country arrived
 3 wanting an interview about how this man was the greatest
 4 statesman in the world, and so that is not, I think, the
 5 best way that the press exercises its freedom.
 6 I would defend the right of the press also, even
 7 when it gets things wrong, as it does on occasions and
 8 in circumstances. I remember when I started off as
 9 a Member of Parliament, I was plagued for the first two
 10 years with a story in the Times that was then in every
 11 one of the cuttings that said -- I was a new MP, of
 12 course, I was only in my early 30s. It said I had been
 13 born in 1926. It said I was a veteran, a stalwart, and
 14 then I was getting letters from pension companies saying
 15 that you had entered a new job late in life and were
 16 about to retire", and would I want to make provision for
 17 that? And the Times had gone into the House of Commons
 18 and had a photograph of me at the age of 19 and said
 19 that I was 57 years old.
 20 That was an honest mistake. Where I think we have
 21 a problem is in two respects. The freedom that the
 22 press has has got to be exercised with responsibility.
 23 Rights in our society can only come with
 24 responsibilities attached to them, and in two very
 25 specific areas in Britain today, we have a problem.

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1 The first is the conflation of fact and opinion,
 2 which is of course totally against the Press Council
 3 guidelines, and I think we ought to explore that, how
 4 standards in journalism could be upheld in a situation
 5 where there is a tendency for newspapers in particular
 6 to editorialise outside their editorial content.
 7 And the second is the thing is the question that the
 8 Dowlers put to us: how can we defend the privacy of
 9 a family who at their moment of greatest grief and at a
 10 time when they're at their most vulnerable have their
 11 privacy invaded by the press in a way that splits the
 12 family apart and makes everybody in that family
 13 suspicious of each other, and particularly so since it's
 14 been done by unlawful means, which include telephone
 15 tapping.
 16 You can deal with the legal issues by enforcing the
 17 law. I don't think the complaint system has ever worked
 18 properly, so I don't think the Dowlers could have
 19 expected to get redress from a complaints system, but
 20 I think -- and this is where I suppose I part company
 21 with some the statements that have been made so far to
 22 the Inquiry -- I think there is an issue not just about
 23 rooting out the bad and how you discipline and sanction
 24 where mistakes are made that are injurious to family
 25 life. I think we have to have some means by which we

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1 **incentivise the good as well. In other words, if the**
 2 **standard of journalism declines, and I think there is an**
 3 **issue in the Internet age about declining standards, we**
 4 **must have a means by which we incentivise the good.**
 5 Q. Thank you. You mention freedom with responsibility, you
 6 mentioned it in your witness statement as well. How
 7 does one instill or ferment the necessary cultural
 8 change in the press to create that responsibility?
 9 **A. I think in the first case it is a matter for the press.**
 10 **I think it's a matter about -- of upholding standards of**
 11 **journalism.**
 12 I was -- funnily enough when I was very young,
 13 editor of my student newspaper at Edinburgh University
 14 and it was successful, we had as rector of our
 15 university at that time Kenneth Allsop, who was one of
 16 the greatest journalists, I think, of that period, and
 17 I used to debate with him this issue about the
 18 responsibility of the press and I'd rely on him because
 19 he influenced my judgments very much on this issue. And
 20 he said very clearly that the press had to exercise its
 21 judgment about what it published, how it framed its
 22 coverage but also how it conflated fact or opinion or
 23 avoided doing so with responsibility. I don't think we
 24 do enough to encourage the good.
 25 If I can say what I think the problem is -- and it

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1 **may be that we're dealing in some cases with the**
 2 **problems of yesterday and not the problems of**
 3 **tomorrow -- we are now in an Internet age, there's**
 4 **a massive flow of information available to everyone. I**
 5 **think it's true that in the 1930s, the BBC would have**
 6 **its news coverage and some days it would say, "There is**
 7 **no news to report today". Can you imagine a situation**
 8 **in 2012 in a 24-hours news, 7-day-a-week media where**
 9 **something like that could be said?**
 10 We're about to see a flood of information on to the
 11 internet. We're moving from the ordinary web to the
 12 semantic web, from the web of linked files to what is
 13 called the web of linked data. So the amount of
 14 information on the internet is going to increase
 15 exponentially, the amount of information about you and
 16 me, the amount of information about people is going to
 17 increase exponentially.
 18 There is a zero cost for publication in the
 19 Internet. I can become a publisher overnight at almost
 20 zero cost. There is a new citizen journalism that is
 21 developing. We have all these things that are
 22 happening, and that is putting pressure on the quality
 23 of ordinary journalism because the advertising and
 24 business model of today's newspapers, today's print
 25 media, is being shot through as advertising gravitates

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1 **from the ordinary news media to the Internet, and the**
 2 **question arises then: who is going to sponsor, who is**
 3 **going to pay for, who is going to be the person that**
 4 **underpins quality journalism? And I believe therefore**
 5 **that we have to look not only at mechanisms by which we**
 6 **deal with abuses in the press, we have to look at**
 7 **mechanisms by which we can enhance and incentivise good**
 8 **standards.**
 9 The BBC found a way to do it in the 1940s when they
 10 introduced the licence fee. Perhaps that licence fee
 11 should be available for the internet and for
 12 publications that go beyond broadcasting. I think
 13 there's a huge debate to be had, but you cannot ignore
 14 a fact that the holder for the coverage of news now is
 15 intimately related to the development of the Internet,
 16 and if standards are not there on the Internet, then the
 17 print media can rightfully say that they're being asked
 18 to observe standards that in no circumstances are being
 19 applied to the Internet. So the issue, I think, is
 20 a new one, and it's one that we have to deal with the
 21 transformation of the technology that is now available
 22 to us and the information flow that is absolutely
 23 massive for the ordinary member of the public.
 24 Q. You refer to the conflation of news and comment.
 25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. And you rightly refer to clause 1 of the code which
 2 directly addresses that, but how in practical terms
 3 would you, if one wished to, segregate news and comment
 4 so they fall into clear compartments?
 5 **A. We've gone into the practice, have we not, of**
 6 **editorialising outside the ordinary editorial. We used**
 7 **to talk about the editorial as the chance for the**
 8 **newspaper to reflect its views.**
 9 Perhaps I could illustrate this best by giving you
 10 an example of what happened during the period of
 11 government. Perhaps it's good -- you could take
 12 a number of examples, but perhaps I could take one that
 13 is controversial: the coverage of Afghanistan.
 14 During the period I was Prime Minister, we had
 15 incredibly difficult decisions to make. This is
 16 a country of 35 million people, 135,000 troops at the
 17 maximum. You have nothing like the coverage that you
 18 have, for example, in Kosovo or East Timor, where you
 19 had 1 in 50, a peace-maker for every 50 people in
 20 Kosovo, and therefore you're dealing with a very complex
 21 set of circumstances in a country that has never been
 22 subject to effective law and order, and at a time when
 23 an army of occupation is -- that started as an army of
 24 liberation is becoming an army of occupation, and you're
 25 making very difficult and complex decisions about how

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<p>1 you deal with these problems, and so we increased the 2 number of troops from 4,900 to 9,500. We increased the 3 money spent on Afghanistan six fold, from 600 million to 4 3.5 billion. The chief of the defence staff said that 5 these were the most effective defence forces that we had 6 ever had, given the resources we were putting into them.</p> <p>7 You could have an honest debate about whether we 8 made policy mistakes. You could have, in fact, a very 9 effective debate about what was the right judgment about 10 troop numbers and everything else. We happened to have 11 the biggest troop numbers of any country apart from 12 America.</p> <p>13 But what, I think, one newspaper in particular 14 decided to do -- and this is my point by way of 15 illustration -- is it didn't want to take on the 16 difficult issues so it reduced their opinion that we 17 were doing something wrong to a view that was an 18 editorialising position that we simply didn't care. So 19 the whole weight of their coverage was not what we had 20 done and whether we had done the right thing; it was 21 that I personally did not care about our troops in 22 Afghanistan. And that's where you conflate fact and 23 opinion, and when you descend into sensationalism, you 24 make it not an issue about honest mistakes or matters of 25 judgment, but about evil intentions.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 17</p>	<p>1 what is happening or even an honest disagreement. That 2 is the tragedy of all. The issue is reduced to: "This 3 person doesn't care."</p> <p>4 Now, that is where I find -- you see, if the media 5 only had a political view and said, "We are 6 Conservative", you could accept that because that's in 7 their editorials and that's part of freedom of speech, 8 but to use the political view to then conflate fact and 9 opinion -- of course that's the opposite of the press 10 rules -- and at the same time to sensationalise, to 11 trivialise and in a sense to demonise, it's what 12 Professor Onora O'Neill, who I think gave the Reith 13 lectures in the early years of the century talked about 14 as a licence to deceive, and I think that is where the 15 danger arises. It's too easy, following, of course, the 16 citizen journalism of the Internet, where there is 17 unresearched items, where people put their views very 18 fiercely, where you have right wing and left wing 19 bloggers, then to sensationalise in the print media, to 20 distort fact and opinion and mix them together, and 21 then, of course, to make it an issue not of policy 22 difference but an issue of motive, an issue of 23 intentions, an issue of character, an issue of 24 personality, an issue of evil practice, and I think 25 that's where the press has failed our country and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 19</p>
<p>1 So you can laugh about it now, and I do laugh about 2 it sometimes. If you pick up a newspaper and you find 3 that you've failed to bow at the cenotaph and then the 4 quote is: "That is an example of how he doesn't care 5 about our troops in Afghanistan", first of all, that 6 isn't true, and secondly that's not the conclusion that 7 should have been drawn.</p> <p>8 You have then a story before that that you fell 9 asleep during the service of remembrance, but you were 10 actually praying and you were bowing your head, and one 11 newspaper decides -- and this was the Sun and I will 12 name it -- this is an example of someone falling asleep 13 and dishonouring the troops and again, you don't care.</p> <p>14 You then have a letter which you send to someone on 15 which is a mark of respect to someone who is deceased 16 and you are told that you have 25 misprints and then 17 a handwriting expert appears to say this shows as lack 18 of empathy and it goes on and on and on, and that is the 19 idea.</p> <p>20 So here is a difficult issue that the press really, 21 in the interests of the British public, have to treat 22 seriously. There are very few war correspondents in 23 Afghanistan actually reporting what is happening on the 24 ground. All the reporting in these newspapers is being 25 done from Westminster, and the issue is not the facts of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 18</p>	<p>1 I think on this particular issue of Afghanistan --</p> <p>2 I could give you an example from the economic crisis 3 or what was called Broken Britain, I could give you 4 examples, but this conflation of fact and opinion and 5 the way it is done is very damaging to the reputation of 6 the media and I find it done differently in other 7 countries.</p> <p>8 Q. Okay. Mr Blair's "feral beast" speech, which was on 9 12 June 2007, days before he left and you took over. 10 Did you agree with the sentiments he expressed in 11 that speech?</p> <p>12 A. I think Tony was saying exactly what I'm saying today, 13 that this issue of fact conflated with opinion -- I've 14 never used these words, nor would I, and I think my 15 sentiment about the importance of the press has been 16 expressed in my earlier remarks to you, that we both 17 need a free press and should support and try to defend 18 and uphold the best of standards in a free press, but 19 I think his remarks were exactly what I'm saying, that 20 if you set out to editorialise beyond your editorial 21 column, if you conflate fact and opinion and put it on 22 the front page of your newspaper, if you then 23 sensationalise it by alleging that the opinion is not 24 about the policy that you're supposed to be discussing 25 but about the person that you are now attacking, then</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 20</p>

5 (Pages 17 to 20)

<p>1 that's not a healthy sign for a democracy.</p> <p>2 I do note on Afghanistan that -- and this is what</p> <p>3 makes me very sad indeed -- I'm afraid that half the</p> <p>4 country is falling into the hands of the Taliban. I'm</p> <p>5 afraid that, as we reduce troops, we're just handing</p> <p>6 over power not to the Afghan army but to the Taliban,</p> <p>7 but the very newspaper that wanted to make the issue</p> <p>8 were we doing enough for our troops, has been virtually</p> <p>9 silent since the day of the General Election in 2010,</p> <p>10 and I have to conclude, as Mr Blair concluded, that</p> <p>11 these were not campaigns that were related to objective</p> <p>12 journalism exposing the facts. These, unfortunately,</p> <p>13 were campaigns that were designed to cause discomfort to</p> <p>14 people who were politically unacceptable.</p> <p>15 Q. Okay. What's your analysis, Mr Brown, for the failure</p> <p>16 to address this issue, the fusion of fact and comment,</p> <p>17 the "feral beast" issue, put it as one wills, between</p> <p>18 1997 and 2010?</p> <p>19 A. Tony gave evidence as few days ago, and he rightly said</p> <p>20 that a decision was made that there would be no</p> <p>21 manifesto commitment to reform of the media.</p> <p>22 When I came in in 2007, we had no mandate in our</p> <p>23 manifesto to propose reform of the media. I did want to</p> <p>24 make a change, and I did try to move away from what</p> <p>25 I thought was the excessive dominance of what is called</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 21</p>	<p>1 it's this small group of insiders who get the benefit of</p> <p>2 early access to information, and I think that is one of</p> <p>3 the problems that prevents the greater openness that we</p> <p>4 have to see.</p> <p>5 Yes, we should have made changes a lot earlier, and</p> <p>6 yes, the changes that eventually we tried to make we</p> <p>7 didn't make successfully, I'm afraid, because there was</p> <p>8 a huge resistance to them, and to be honest, if you</p> <p>9 announce something in Parliament or announced it in</p> <p>10 a speech, it was not being reported. Unless it had been</p> <p>11 given as an exclusive to a newspaper, they tended to put</p> <p>12 it on page 6, rather than page 1.</p> <p>13 Q. Wasn't part of the reason for the inaction simply this,</p> <p>14 that until September 2009, your government had the</p> <p>15 support of the Sun, or certainly didn't expressly not</p> <p>16 have the support of the Sun and therefore the political</p> <p>17 will did not exist to take on the feral beasts?</p> <p>18 A. I think that's a completely wrong impression about what</p> <p>19 was happening. I don't see us having the support the</p> <p>20 Sun for almost all the time that I was Prime Minister.</p> <p>21 You have to remember that when I started off as</p> <p>22 Prime Minister, the first thing the Sun did was try to</p> <p>23 ruin my first party conference but launching their huge</p> <p>24 campaign about how we were selling Britain down the</p> <p>25 river and demanding not only a European referendum but</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 23</p>
<p>1 the lobby system, and what really has led to these</p> <p>2 allegations of spin -- by the way, spin assumes that you</p> <p>3 got success in getting your message across, even if it's</p> <p>4 superficial and I don't think anybody could accuse me of</p> <p>5 having a great success in getting my message across.</p> <p>6 But I tried to move away from that.</p> <p>7 One, we moved from having a political chief of</p> <p>8 communications to having a civil servant doing the job.</p> <p>9 That was to send the message that we were not trying to</p> <p>10 politicise government information; we were trying to</p> <p>11 give the information that was necessary for the public</p> <p>12 to understand what was happening.</p> <p>13 We then tried to move back to a system where</p> <p>14 announcements were made in Parliament. They were not</p> <p>15 pre-briefed, they were made in Parliament, and therefore</p> <p>16 that moved away from a system where, to be honest, there</p> <p>17 were a selected group of people who previously could</p> <p>18 expect to get early access to information, and I think</p> <p>19 that's been a problem with the way the media system has</p> <p>20 worked, but I'm afraid it was wholly unsuccessful, and</p> <p>21 I see that the current government have moved back to</p> <p>22 having a political appointee as -- originally, of</p> <p>23 course, Mr Coulson as the head of the communications</p> <p>24 operation, and the lobby system remains intact.</p> <p>25 It's not the lobby system per se that's the problem,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 22</p>	<p>1 demanding that I support it. Then they ran, I think,</p> <p>2 a huge campaign on Broken Britain, which was taken up by</p> <p>3 the Conservative Party but was simply an attack on the</p> <p>4 government. So at no point in these three years that</p> <p>5 I was Prime Minister did I ever feel I had the support</p> <p>6 of the Sun.</p> <p>7 I think what really changed, however, and I have to</p> <p>8 be honest about this, is when News International decided</p> <p>9 that their commercial interests came first, and I have</p> <p>10 to be absolutely clear about that, and I've submitted</p> <p>11 a note to you about that. There was a point in 2008 and</p> <p>12 2009 where, particularly with James Murdoch's speech in</p> <p>13 Edinburgh at the MacTaggart lecture when he set out an</p> <p>14 agenda, which to me was quite breathtaking in its</p> <p>15 arrogance and its ambition, and that was to neuter the</p> <p>16 BBC, it was to undermine Ofcom, the regulator, and it</p> <p>17 was a whole series of policy aims, which I've itemised</p> <p>18 for you in evidence I've given you, which no government</p> <p>19 that I was involved in could ever agree to. So the BBC</p> <p>20 licence fee was to be cut, they were to be taken out of</p> <p>21 much of the work on the Internet, their commercial</p> <p>22 activities were to be reduced, Ofcom was to be neutered,</p> <p>23 the listing of sporting occasions was to benefit</p> <p>24 News International, product placement was to be allowed.</p> <p>25 A whole series of issues. The impartiality of news</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 24</p>

<p>1 coverage should be removed as a requirement on the need, 2 and it should be like Fox News and not Sky News. 3 The remarkable thing about this period in 4 government -- and I say this with regret, and I say this 5 with a great deal of sadness -- is that we could not go 6 along with that sort of agenda. We could not go along 7 with the neutering of Ofcom or the BBC seeing its 8 licence fee cut in real terms -- as I think has happened 9 now by something in the order of 15 per cent by 2016, 10 plus a whole series of other responsibilities put on 11 them -- nor could we see a case for the BBC being taken 12 out of much of its work on the Internet because that's 13 a valuable media service for the future, but while we 14 resisted that and were not supported, on each and every 15 one of these issues, I'm afraid to say -- and I think 16 this is an issue of public policy -- the Conservative 17 Party supported every one of the recommendations that 18 were made by the Murdoch group. 19 Q. There's possibly the slight danger there, Mr Brown, of 20 straying away from the ambit of the question. 21 A. I want to make the point, Mr Jay, if I may -- 22 Q. I was going to come to? 23 A. -- it was suggested that somehow relations with the Sun 24 newspaper or with Mr Murdoch broke down because he 25 decided that he wanted to support the Conservative Page 25</p>	<p>1 I don't want to cause you or your family any distress 2 unnecessarily, but I hope you will see the value of the 3 example, in the same way as I apologised to those who 4 complained about press intrusion last November when they 5 gave evidence, because I do think it's an important part 6 of the story. 7 A. I'm very grateful to you, Lord Justice Leveson. I have 8 never sought to bring my children into the public 9 domain, but I do think if we don't learn the lessons 10 from this, we'll continue to make mistakes. 11 In 2006, the Sun claimed that they had a story from 12 a man in the street who happened to be the father of 13 someone who suffered from cystic fibrosis. I never 14 believed that could be correct. At best, he could only 15 have been the middleman, because there were only a few 16 people, medical people, who knew that our son had this 17 condition. 18 In fact, for the first three months that our son was 19 alive, I just have to say to you, we didn't know, 20 because there were tests being done all the time to 21 decide whether this was indeed his condition or not, and 22 only by that time, just before the Sun appeared with 23 this information, had the medical experts told us that 24 there was no other diagnosis that they could give than 25 that this was the case. So only a few people knew this. Page 27</p>
<p>1 Party. I want to suggest to you that the commercial 2 interests of News International were very clear long 3 before that and they had support from the Conservative 4 Party. 5 Q. May I move off the general comments now, Mr Brown, onto 6 your own experience, which is page 14214, or page 8 on 7 the internal numbering of your statement. Can I go back 8 to 2006 and the story in relation to your younger son in 9 the Sun newspaper. 10 May we start off, please, by establishing the facts 11 as you know them to be in relation to this story. In 12 particular, do you know the Sun newspaper's source for 13 that story? 14 A. This is very difficult for me, if I may say so, because 15 I've never chosen and never wanted my son or my sons and 16 my daughter ever to have been across the media. I do 17 think there is an issue -- and I hope that you will 18 address this -- about the rights of children to be free 19 from unfair coverage in media publications. But because 20 this issue was raised and became an issue for me, I've 21 had to look at what actually happened at the time and 22 it's only, in a sense, latterly that the facts that 23 I think are necessary to a fair examination of this have 24 become available. 25 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Mr Brown, let me make it clear, Page 26</p>	<p>1 I have submitted to you a letter from Fife Health 2 Board which makes -- the National Health Service in 3 Fife, that is -- which makes it clear that they have 4 apologised to us because they now believe it highly 5 likely that there was unauthorised information given by 6 a medical or working member of the NHS staff that 7 allowed the Sun, in the end, through this middleman, to 8 publish this story. 9 Now, whether medical information should ever be 10 hounded out without the authorisation of a parent or of 11 a doctor through the willingness of a parent is one 12 issue that I think it addressed, and I know the Press 13 Complaints Commission code is very clear, that there are 14 only exceptional circumstances in which a child's -- or 15 information about a child should be broadcast, and 16 I don't believe that this was one of them. 17 I find it sad that even now, in 2012, members of the 18 News International staff are coming to this Inquiry and 19 maintaining this fiction that a story that could only 20 have been achieved or obtained through medical 21 information or through me or my wife leaking it -- which 22 we never did, of course -- was obtained in another way. 23 I think we cannot learn the lessons of what has happened 24 with the media unless there is some honesty about what 25 actually happened and whether payment was made and Page 28</p>

<p>1 whether this is a practice that could continue, and if 2 we don't root out this kind of practice, I don't think 3 that we can sensibly say that we've dealt with some of 4 the abuses that are problematical for us. 5 I would say this about any child. I don't think any 6 child's medical information, particularly at four 7 months, has any interest for the public and should be 8 broadcast to the public. 9 MR JAY: Could you tell us, please, Mr Brown, the 10 circumstances in which you or your wife were told that 11 the Sun had this story and were minded to print it? 12 A. I think again, if I can be very specific about this, 13 because it is something that I believe you've been given 14 information in this Inquiry that is not strictly 15 correct. Our press office was phoned by a journalist 16 from the Sun and said that they had this story about our 17 son's condition and they were going to publish it. 18 I was then contacted. I was engaged in the pre-budget 19 report. I immediately, of course, phoned my wife, 20 Sarah, and we had to make a decision. If this was going 21 to be published, what should happen? We wanted to 22 minimise the damage, to limit the impact of this, and 23 therefore we said that if this story was to be 24 published, then we wanted a statement that went to 25 everyone that was an end to this, and there would be no Page 29</p>	<p>1 choice that we are told we made, to give explicit 2 permission for that to happen. 3 So there was no question ever of explicit 4 permission, and I think if my son were to read, at 5 a later stage, on the Internet that his mother or I had 6 given permission that all his medical information or 7 medical knowledge should be broadcast in a newspaper, he 8 would be shocked at our failure as parents. So I just 9 cannot accept, as a parent, that we would ever put 10 ourselves in a position where we gave explicit 11 permission for medical knowledge about our son to be 12 broadcast to the press. 13 We had, I'm afraid, had previous experience of this 14 when our daughter died, and we were very aware that this 15 was a problem, but when you're presented with a fait 16 accompli, there's nothing you can do other than to try 17 to limit and minimise the damage. 18 I may say we had not told relatives about this. 19 This is a hereditary condition and therefore there were 20 some relatives who actually were directly affected by it 21 and we had to tell them. So there was no question of us 22 being willing or complicit or anxious or, as one of your 23 core participants has said this morning, desiring that 24 this information be made public. No question about that 25 at all. You could never imagine a situation. Page 31</p>
<p>1 further statements, no days and days and days of talking 2 about the condition of our son. 3 Unfortunately, this was unacceptable to the Sun 4 newspaper. The editor phoned our press office and said 5 that this was not the way that we should go about this, 6 and to be honest, if we continued to insist that we were 7 going to make a general statement, the Sun wouldn't, in 8 future, give us any chance of advance information on any 9 other story that they would do. 10 It was at that time that the editor of the Sun 11 phoned my wife, whose aim then, having accepted that 12 this was a fait accompli -- there was no thought that 13 the Press Complaints Commission could help us on this. 14 I think we were in a different world then. Nobody ever 15 expected that the Press Complaints Commission would act 16 to give us any help on this, and we were presented with 17 a fait accompli, I'm afraid. There was no question of 18 us giving permission for this. There was no question of 19 implicit or explicit permission. 20 I ask you: if any mother or any father was presented 21 with a choice as to whether a four-month old son's 22 medical condition, your child's medical condition, 23 should be broadcast on the front page of a tabloid 24 newspaper and you had a choice in this matter -- I don't 25 think there's any parent in the land would have made the Page 30</p>	<p>1 If people are able to say, in the aftermath of 2 something like this, that they've had explicit 3 permission when they haven't, and they can claim 4 ex post facto that permission was given when there's no 5 evidence that there was, then this practice will go on 6 and on and on and children's information and information 7 about people will go into the public arena with this 8 idea that you can claim afterwards that you had explicit 9 permission for something you never had permission for. 10 I think this is important because we have to learn 11 lessons from this, and I think there are more general 12 lessons to be learned, but surely the rights of children 13 must come first. 14 Q. Thank you, Mr Brown. Another core participant has 15 required me to put some questions to you, of which 16 I know you have advance notice. I might just run 17 through them. 18 Mrs Brooks has stated on oath that the Sun had 19 consent from your wife to run the story in November 20 2006. Do you deny that consent was given? 21 A. Absolutely. My wife has issued a statement to that 22 effect. 23 Q. If no consent was given, you and your wife must have 24 been extremely upset and angry. If so, why was no 25 complaint made by either yourself or your wife Page 32</p>

<p>1 until June 2011?</p> <p>2 A. That's not correct at all. Again, I think the</p> <p>3 trivialisation of this is really unfortunate.</p> <p>4 When we found out that this had happened -- and we</p> <p>5 had had our previous experience, when information,</p> <p>6 medical information about our daughter, had been made</p> <p>7 public before she died -- we thought the only way to</p> <p>8 deal with this was to get the Press Complaints</p> <p>9 Commission in this case, but through the editors of the</p> <p>10 major newspapers, to reach an agreement that they would</p> <p>11 not publish information or photograph our children.</p> <p>12 Before I became Prime Minister, I set in motion, and</p> <p>13 Sarah and I set in motion, this procedure that we would</p> <p>14 ask the editors of all the newspapers. We felt this was</p> <p>15 a structural problem. It wasn't simply a problem</p> <p>16 associated with only one newspaper. We wanted them to</p> <p>17 agree that our children would not be covered while they</p> <p>18 were at nursery school and primary school. They're very</p> <p>19 young, as you may know.</p> <p>20 We didn't want our children to grow up thinking that</p> <p>21 they were somehow minor celebrities. We'd seen the</p> <p>22 effect of this in other countries. We wanted our</p> <p>23 children to grow up just as ordinary young kids that</p> <p>24 went to school with everybody else and were treated just</p> <p>25 like everybody else. So it was important to us that we</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 33</p>	<p>1 in the White Ribbon Alliance and in the campaign to cut</p> <p>2 maternal deaths, the maternal mortality campaign, which</p> <p>3 was incredibly successful in cutting maternal mortality</p> <p>4 by 30 per cent. And it was Wendi Murdoch -- and I think</p> <p>5 it was her 40th birthday as well -- and Sarah that had</p> <p>6 campaigned together on this maternal mortality campaign.</p> <p>7 So my wife's charity work is something that she was</p> <p>8 engaged in quite separately from my political work. As</p> <p>9 far as I was concerned, I couldn't allow what had</p> <p>10 happened to me to become a huge issue when I had a job</p> <p>11 to do.</p> <p>12 Q. Are you aware that your wife wrote Mrs Brooks a number</p> <p>13 of personal notes and letters between 2006 and 2010 in</p> <p>14 which she expressed her gratitude for "the support given</p> <p>15 to us"?</p> <p>16 A. Well, I think my wife, as I said, is a person who is</p> <p>17 forgiving and would be kind to people irrespective of</p> <p>18 what had happened in this particular incident, and</p> <p>19 I don't think that that is evidence that we gave</p> <p>20 explicit permission for a story to appear in the Sun.</p> <p>21 Q. The last question, if I can turn to you: the records</p> <p>22 show that there are 13 meetings between you or your wife</p> <p>23 after Mrs Brooks had caused the article to be published</p> <p>24 in November 2006. Why did you have those meetings?</p> <p>25 A. Well, I'm not sure that there were 30, but I think that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 35</p>
<p>1 had this agreement with the press, but that is how we</p> <p>2 went about changing the way things had been done, and to</p> <p>3 be fair to the media -- and I say this in my written</p> <p>4 evidence, that we did have only two incidents where this</p> <p>5 was breached. So it was possible, after this, to hold</p> <p>6 a voluntary agreement, but the idea that we did nothing</p> <p>7 after this incident is quite wrong, and I'm afraid it's</p> <p>8 offensive. We took action to deal with it in the best</p> <p>9 way we could without any fuss and without any noise, but</p> <p>10 to get an agreement that children would not be covered</p> <p>11 in this way, and I hope it is of help to others in</p> <p>12 similar positions.</p> <p>13 Q. Thank you. Why did your wife in particular remain good</p> <p>14 friends with Mrs Brooks, to the extent of arranging</p> <p>15 a 40th birthday party at Chequers for her in June 2008,</p> <p>16 attending her birthday party in 2008 and Mrs Brooks'</p> <p>17 wedding in June 2009, if what you say is correct?</p> <p>18 A. I think Sarah is one of the most forgiving people</p> <p>19 I know, and I think she finds the good in everyone.</p> <p>20 Look, we had to accept that this had happened, and</p> <p>21 we had to get on the with job of doing what people</p> <p>22 expected a politician to do, to run a government. My</p> <p>23 wife had a massive amount of charity work that she was</p> <p>24 engaged in, and in fact, if I'm being accurate, I think</p> <p>25 it was Wendi Murdoch, Mrs Murdoch's wife, who joined her</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 34</p>	<p>1 we had regular meetings -- what is the role of</p> <p>2 a politician, particularly someone who is</p> <p>3 a prime minister? You have a duty to explain. You have</p> <p>4 to engage with the media. They are a medium by which</p> <p>5 the concerns of the nation are expressed. We were</p> <p>6 a country at war in Afghanistan, and before that, in</p> <p>7 Iraq, at the time I was Prime Minister. We were</p> <p>8 a country that faced a grave economic crisis. I would</p> <p>9 have been failing in my duty if I had not tried -- and</p> <p>10 I've listed all the meetings with the Telegraph, with</p> <p>11 the Mail. They're hardly Labour supporters, are they,</p> <p>12 and hardly people that actually did a huge amount to</p> <p>13 promote my premiership? I met them all to try to</p> <p>14 explain because I believed I had a duty to try to build</p> <p>15 a consensus in this country about how we approached what</p> <p>16 was the most difficult problem that took, after the</p> <p>17 global economic crisis, most of my time, Afghanistan,</p> <p>18 and how we approached the economic crisis.</p> <p>19 I think people would be criticising me if I had</p> <p>20 failed to talk to the media and failed to engage with</p> <p>21 them, but I may say to you: there was a red line in</p> <p>22 everything I ever did, and there was a line in the sand</p> <p>23 across which I could never cross. If there was any</p> <p>24 question that a vested interest was trying to promote</p> <p>25 something that was against the public interest, then</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 36</p>

<p>1 I could have nothing to do with that, and I think you 2 can serve up dinner but you don't need to serve up BSkyB 3 as part of the dinner. You have to have a clear 4 dividing line between what you do in politics, and for 5 me there was never a point -- we had issues related to 6 the takeover or attempted takeover of ITV. We had -- 7 News International were very annoyed about what was 8 happening in Ofcom to sporting rights. We had other 9 news media concerned about different things. The BBC, 10 of course, was concerned about the licence fee. 11 But at no point in my premiership would I ever allow 12 a commercial interest to override the public interest, 13 and I've looked at all the records of what happened, 14 including the records of our ministers in this matter, 15 and we would never allow the public interest to be 16 subjugated to the commercial or vested interests of any 17 one company. 18 Q. Did you sense, though, in your dealings with 19 News International, that they were trying to persuade 20 you to pursue media policies which were favourable to 21 their interests but contrary to the public interest? 22 A. News International had a public agenda. What's 23 remarkable about what happened in the period of 2009 and 24 2010 is that News International moved from being -- 25 I think it was under James Murdoch's influence, not so</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 37</p>	<p>1 perceived her to be a powerful women and it would have 2 been against your interest to have taken her on? 3 A. I don't think I had a conversation with Mrs Brooks in 4 the last -- I think I had one conversation in the last 5 nine months of our government. 6 It became very clear in the summer of 2009, when 7 Mr Murdoch junior gave the MacTaggart lecture, that 8 News International had a highly politicised agenda for 9 changes that were in the media policy of this country, 10 and there seemed to me very little point in talking to 11 them about this. 12 Q. Okay. Page 9 of your statement -- we're just going to 13 note this, Mr Brown. This is our page 14215. You 14 identify a number of breaches of your privacy, whether 15 assaults, as it were, on your build society account, the 16 national police computer was entered to check your name 17 on police files, blagging, et cetera. We've heard 18 evidence in relation to a lot of that already, but you 19 formally draw this to our attention. 20 A. Yes. Let me say, politicians must expect scrutiny. 21 I have no doubt that the level of scrutiny that is going 22 to happen in a modern technology age is going to be 23 very, very great indeed. 24 I think the question is whether you can justify what 25 you might call fishing expeditions, based on nothing</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 39</p>
<p>1 much Rupert Murdoch's influence, if I may say so -- to 2 having an aggressive public agenda. They wanted not 3 just to buy BSkyB, of course; they wanted to change the 4 whole nature of the BBC. They wanted to change Ofcom, 5 they wanted to change the media impartiality rules, they 6 wanted to change the way we dealt with advertising so 7 that there was more rights for the media company to gain 8 advertisers. They wanted to open up sporting events so 9 that Sky could bid for them in a way that -- they were 10 perfectly entitled to put this agenda. That was the 11 agenda they were putting publicly. I think what became 12 a problem for us was that on every one of these single 13 issues, the Conservative Party went along with the 14 policy, whereas we were trying to defend what I believe 15 was the public interest. 16 Q. So is this the gist of your evidence: that the agenda 17 they pursued was done publicly but not privately? 18 A. I think their agenda was very public, and I don't think 19 that they should be criticised for having a view about 20 events. I think, however, it is the duty of the 21 political system to distinguish between what's a vested 22 interest and what's a public interest. I did so, and 23 I think we did so at a cost. 24 Q. Was not part of your reason, Mr Brown, for continuing to 25 have dealings with Mrs Brooks that you correctly</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 38</p>	<p>1 other than a political desire to embarrass someone, and 2 I think the evidence that I give you is in relation to 3 fishing expeditions where newspapers -- 4 Look, if you take everything that is personal about 5 your life -- your bank or building society account, your 6 medical records, your tax affairs, your lawyer and what 7 he -- his legal records, your accountant -- in every 8 area during the period that I was chancellor, there was 9 either a break-in or a breach of these records. In most 10 cases, I can show now that that happened because of an 11 intrusion by the media. 12 Now, I have been the first to say that there is 13 a public interest defence if people are looking for 14 information where they feel that there's a crime being 15 committed and that the police or someone else is not 16 investigating it, or where there's a security issue that 17 is vital to the safety of the country and it's not being 18 properly looked into, or, as the Press Complaints 19 Commission rules themselves say, where there is an 20 individual who is lying and who is deceiving. But 21 I look at these instances, and I give you one as an 22 example. I just give it to you. I was accused of 23 buying a flat in an under-the-counter sale by 24 a Sunday Times Insight team. They suggested that I'd 25 bought this flat and it hadn't appeared on the open</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 40</p>

<p>1 market and I got it at a knock-down price, and they 2 would not accept that -- the starting point of any 3 investigation was something that they would not 4 acknowledge, that this very flat that I was supposed to 5 have bought in an under-the-counter sale had first of 6 all been advertised in the Sunday Times itself.</p> <p>7 We had impersonating me to get bank information, we 8 had blagging by lawyers, we had what's called reverse 9 engineering of telephone. Someone sent me a tape which 10 I passed on to the police, where the Sunday Times 11 Insight team reporters are talking about how they're 12 going to use these -- what I think are underhanded, 13 perhaps unlawful techniques and tactics. But there was 14 no public justification for this because there was no 15 wrongdoing, and even now, I'm afraid the editor of the 16 Sunday Times has come to your Inquiry and said that he 17 had evidence of something that he was never able to 18 prove and there was no public interest justification for 19 the intrusion and the impersonation and the breaking 20 into the records.</p> <p>21 I accept a huge amount has to be tolerated in the 22 interests of a politics that is free of corruption, but 23 I don't think a newspaper, when it resorts to these 24 tactics and then finds that there's nothing to report, 25 should hold to a story which they know patently to be</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 41</p>	<p>1 limited, with the Guardian. Mr Harding of the Times. 2 One meeting with Mr Hinton, one with the Lebedevs. 3 It's a full range, really. Would you agree? 4 A. Yes. I tried my best to meet everyone. I think 5 probably -- yes, I met everyone where I could, and I did 6 it sometimes at events that they had organised, 7 sometimes at events that we organised, but I did it as 8 regularly as I could. Not, I may say, with a great deal 9 of success.</p> <p>10 Q. In relation to the Murdochs, on the internal numbering 11 of this document on the top right, page 12, we see that 12 there are only two relevant meetings with 13 Mr James Murdoch. The last was on 19 January 2009. Do 14 you see that? And then there's a list of your meetings 15 with Mr Rupert Murdoch. 16 You've put in a revised schedule quite recently, 17 which -- 18 A. I did so, if I may say so, because the Cabinet Office 19 gave me the information, and I gave you what information 20 they'd given me originally and I now give you the 21 information they've given me subsequently. So that -- 22 if there has been --</p> <p>23 Q. We will publish the revised schedule. It removes the 24 meeting of 5 October 2007 which you say didn't take 25 place.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 43</p>
<p>1 absolutely wrong. If you can laugh at it now, that they 2 were claiming something that actually was advertised in 3 their own paper was not correct, we have lessons to 4 learn from that.</p> <p>5 It's about freedom being exercised with 6 responsibility and where irresponsibility is the way 7 that freedom is exercised, it casts a doubt on the 8 motives of the media.</p> <p>9 Q. May we look now at your exhibit GB3, which is a list of 10 your meetings with the media between 2007 and 2010. 11 It's under tab 5 of the bundle we've prepared. Just so 12 we get the flavour of this. 13 A. It's -- it was a duty of office, if I may say so. If 14 I had not met media owners and editors, I would be 15 failing in my duty. We had to explain to them what was 16 basically two huge national issues, and the reason that 17 calls are greater in some parts than others is because 18 Afghanistan and the economic crisis were bigger issues 19 at the time.</p> <p>20 Q. We can see the range of people you were seeing, 21 Mr Brown. The Barclays at the Telegraph on the first 22 page, Mr Paul Dacre on the second page. Quite a few 23 interactions with him, mainly over breakfast. We'll be 24 coming back to that. Mr Dan Cone(?) of the Telegraph, 25 the editor of the Telegraph, them some meetings, quite</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 42</p>	<p>1 According to exhibit KRM 27, the exhibits to 2 Mr Rupert Murdoch's witness statement, there was 3 a meeting on 6 October. I thought there was also 4 a phone call on 4 October, but that may not be right. 5 No, his meetings start on 6 October so there's nothing 6 for 4 October.</p> <p>7 If we can deal with one point which was floated in 8 evidence. This relates to the snap election, if you 9 recall that, in 2007. An interview was pre-recorded by 10 Andrew Marr with you on Saturday, 6 October. We know 11 that there was dinner at Chequers with Mr Murdoch and 12 his wife and others on the evening of 6 October 2007. 13 A. That's right. I think there was a misunderstanding, 14 that people thought that I'd met Mr Murdoch and then 15 done an interview with Mr Marr, and that somehow that 16 would have influenced what I said to Mr Marr. In fact, 17 I did the interview with Mr Marr and was very careful to 18 do it before I had any meetings. I spoke to Mr Marr, 19 did the interview, it was recorded the day before, so 20 when I went for dinner with Mr Murdoch later on, I'd 21 already recorded everything I was going to say about 22 these issues and he had no influence on that interview 23 or any decision I made, and he wasn't consulted about 24 it, nor should he have been, nor, to be fair to him, 25 would he have expected to have been.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 44</p>

11 (Pages 41 to 44)

<p>1 Q. I think there's also a correction of the dinner with 2 President Bush was 15 June, not 15 August 2008. There 3 are a couple of other meetings which you've added to 4 your schedule but I don't think much turns on those. 5 We'll publish the revised schedule in due course, 6 Mr Brown.</p> <p>7 A. Okay.</p> <p>8 Q. There's also a list of phone calls at GB3B, which we'll 9 come to in a short moment.</p> <p>10 In relation to Mr Rupert Murdoch, Lord Mandelson has 11 told us that relations were closer than was wise, and he 12 included you within that statement. Do you agree with 13 him?</p> <p>14 A. No, I don't, actually, and I'm sorry, because I think 15 Mr Mandelson is perceptive about events normally. 16 I think -- I obviously came from a Scottish 17 Presbyterian background. Mr Murdoch himself was the 18 grandson of a Scottish Presbyterian minister. I always 19 found it interesting that his grandfather had gone out 20 to Australia and immediately been put into prison 21 because he had defended church against state, so the 22 same Presbyterian interest in the freedom of conscience 23 and the, if you like, speaking truth to power was 24 I think very much part of what Rupert Murdoch's view of 25 the media was.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 45</p>	<p>1 But I think you have to distinguish again between 2 the views that you have about him as an individual and 3 the red line that I would draw, the line in the sand 4 I talked about, between that and any support for 5 commercial interests.</p> <p>6 Q. But Lord Mandelson, when stating that relations were 7 closer than was wise, also made it clear that neither 8 Mr Blair nor you crossed that line, so I think his point 9 was more about perception than the reality. On that 10 basis, do you accept his observation?</p> <p>11 A. No, because the implication is that I would be 12 influenced by what Mr Murdoch was saying about these big 13 issues. I mean, I thought that it was wrong to join the 14 euro and I think we'll come back to that when you talk 15 about some of the issues relating to the media later, 16 but I didn't agree with him on most of these other 17 issues, and the idea that Mr Murdoch and I had a common 18 bond in policy is, I'm afraid, not correct. Mr Murdoch 19 was probably more on the flat tax school of policy than 20 in the school of policy that was identified with what we 21 were doing.</p> <p>22 But I don't detract from the respect that I think he 23 deserves for having built up a very strong media empire, 24 starting from a view about the importance of a free 25 media.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 47</p>
<p>1 So I understood, I think, quite a lot about his 2 Scottish background, but the idea that I was influenced 3 in what I did by Mr Rupert Murdoch's views is faintly 4 ridiculous, because Mr Murdoch would have, if he had had 5 the chance, persuaded us to leave the European Union, 6 not just stay out of the euro. He probably would have 7 had us at war with France and Germany. He probably 8 would have had us as a 51st state of America, and 9 Scotland, of course, which he wants to be independent, 10 he would have had as the 52nd state, with probably 11 a Republic in Scotland.</p> <p>12 So the idea that I went along with Mr Murdoch's 13 views is quite ridiculous. Mr Murdoch has very strong 14 views. He's entitled these views. The idea that I was 15 following his views is just absolutely nonsense.</p> <p>16 Q. Mr Murdoch himself describes a warm relationship he had 17 with you. Is that a fair characterisation?</p> <p>18 A. Yeah, I think the similar background made it interesting 19 because I think I understood where many of his views 20 came from, and I do also think he's been, as I said, 21 I think, publicly, a very successful businessman, and 22 his ability to build up a newspaper and media empire, 23 not just in Australia but in two other continents, in 24 America and Europe, is something that is not going to be 25 surpassed easily by any other individual.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 46</p>	<p>1 Q. Between 1997 and 2007, were relations closer than was 2 wise?</p> <p>3 A. No, I don't think so. I rarely met Mr Murdoch, to be 4 absolutely truthful. I don't think he was in the 5 slightest bit interested in what I was doing --</p> <p>6 Q. Yes.</p> <p>7 A. -- and I can't remember many meetings with him at all. 8 I don't know if you have a record of these meetings but 9 I think you'll find them few and partner between.</p> <p>10 Q. Speaking more generally of the government of which you 11 were part, do you think that government was too close 12 than was wise to Mr Murdoch?</p> <p>13 A. I don't think so, but I don't know all the details of 14 what was discussed at the time. I had very few dealings 15 with Mr Murdoch and not many dealings with 16 News International. They had their own views on issues 17 of policy, and they weren't, in many ways, similar to 18 mine.</p> <p>19 Q. But weren't you aware of policy from the very top, as it 20 were, courting, assuaging and persuading the media, 21 including, in particular, News International. Was that 22 something (a) that you were aware of and (b) that you 23 assented to?</p> <p>24 A. My efforts were to persuade every media group that what 25 we were doing was serious. Look, we were trying to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 48</p>

12 (Pages 45 to 48)

1 **rebuild the National Health Service, improve our**
 2 **education system, get more police onto the street,**
 3 **legislate for freedom of information. We had agendas on**
 4 **civil liberties, on issues like gay partnerships. All**
 5 **these issues, you needed to have an understanding, at**
 6 **least, on the part of the media, and you needed to talk**
 7 **to them.**
 8 **As for any particular media group, I don't think**
 9 **that I was involved in any sort of way that I would feel**
 10 **uncomfortable about now with any particular media group**
 11 **at all.**
 12 Q. You must have been aware, though, of the pieces in the
 13 Sun newspaper in March and April 1997 which we're told
 14 adopted a rhetorical position but not one of substance.
 15 Didn't those pieces cause you any qualms or distaste at
 16 the time?
 17 A. Are you talking about the articles about the euro or
 18 about Europe?
 19 Q. Yes.
 20 A. It's a strange coincidence that I, while supporting the
 21 idea of a single currency in principle, was always
 22 doubtful and dubious about its benefits to Britain in
 23 practice, so I have found it of no great difficulty to
 24 me that people were questioning the euro.
 25 I think this goes to the heart of what happened

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1 **during a period of 13 years of government, that the euro**
 2 **was a huge, huge issue, because some people argued that**
 3 **if Britain did not join the euro then its future was**
 4 **always to be on the periphery of Europe, and that was an**
 5 **issue that had to be taken seriously.**
 6 **I, however, argued that the economics of the euro**
 7 **made it almost impossible that Britain could benefit**
 8 **from joining, and we did a whole series of studies in**
 9 **detail showing that in fact it may not be of great**
 10 **benefit to Europe to have the euro.**
 11 Q. Even looking back on this period -- I'm looking now at
 12 the period 1997 to 2007 -- do you think that there are
 13 any lessons to be learnt from the relationship the
 14 Labour government, of which you were a part, fostered
 15 with the media, in particular News International?
 16 A. Definitely. I hope I'm not misunderstood, because my
 17 original point was this: that we accepted too easily
 18 a closed culture where it was possible for stories about
 19 political events to be told to a few people rather than
 20 openly by Parliamentary announcement or by speech, and
 21 we should have reformed that system earlier, and the
 22 system, I'm afraid, is still waiting to be reformed
 23 announcement. It is too closed a system. It relies on
 24 too small a number of people. Of course, it has its
 25 heart in the lobby system, but it is actually the

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1 **exclusivity for some people within the lobby that people**
 2 **rightly, I think, resent.**
 3 **But when we tried to change it after 2007, we found**
 4 **it example impossible to do so, and this openness of**
 5 **culture that we should have really encouraged earlier is**
 6 **something that I think still eludes us.**
 7 Q. In 1997, did you believe that the support of the Sun
 8 newspaper was important or not?
 9 A. Well, I wasn't involved in that particular issue.
 10 I wasn't involved in talks about that, but clearly, if
 11 you'd been in opposition for what has been 18 years, and
 12 a newspaper that has previously been Conservative comes
 13 to you or is prepared to come to you, that is a bonus,
 14 that is something that you would welcome. But it's not
 15 the be all and end all, and it's not something that
 16 dictates the future of politics in your country, but
 17 it's an important element of building a coalition for
 18 success.
 19 Q. Going forward 12 years to 2009 --
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. -- were you not concerned at the times, as it were, the
 22 signs of the Sun moving away from you to support the
 23 Tory Party?
 24 A. I think that had happened from the time I became
 25 Prime Minister. I'll be honest. I think they had

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1 **severe reservations that were expressed in the European**
 2 **campaign, the Broken Britain campaign, their Afghanistan**
 3 **campaign, and I think, as I said, also there was a new**
 4 **agenda that Mr James Murdoch was promoting about the**
 5 **future of the media policy in Britain. So I was not**
 6 **surprised at all when the Sun -- I perhaps was surprised**
 7 **about the way they did it, which was a strange thing to**
 8 **do, but the act of deciding to go with the**
 9 **Conservatives, I think, had been planned over many, many**
 10 **months.**
 11 Q. But Lord Mandelson's account in his book was that the
 12 shift of support stung you, to use his words, and in the
 13 weeks and months that followed, it grated on you more
 14 and more. Is that an accurate observation or not?
 15 A. No, I don't think so, because I had accepted that --
 16 I never complained to the Sun about us losing their
 17 support. I never phoned them up. I have never asked
 18 a newspaper for their support directly and I've never
 19 complained when they haven't given us their support.
 20 I don't think that you should be dependent on people by
 21 begging them to support you in this way, and perhaps
 22 it's a failing on my part that I never asked them
 23 directly, but I never asked them directly, and I never
 24 complained to them directly when they withdrew support
 25 from the Labour Party.

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<p>1 Q. I'm not sure that Lord Mandelson is saying that. He's 2 making a personal observation, that you were personally 3 stung and that's something that --</p> <p>4 A. No, I don't think the word "stung" is correct, because 5 I expected it. It was something that you could read for 6 months previously. I think the manner in which they did 7 it was offensive, but that was their choice, but I don't 8 think that I was stung by it at all.</p> <p>9 Q. Many commentators have said, rightly or wrongly, that 10 you're someone who is obsessed by the news and therefore 11 from that obsession, if correct, more likely to be stung 12 by this sort of change of support. Is that a fair 13 observation or not?</p> <p>14 A. Well, you may say I'm so obsessed by the newspapers that 15 I barely read them, so -- I have to tell you that that 16 is not -- even in Downing Street, I didn't spend a great 17 deal of time reading newspapers at all.</p> <p>18 Obviously if you're in a job where you have 24-hour 19 questions about what's going on, you have to be able to 20 answer them, so you have to have someone that's telling 21 you: "You have to answer this question and that question 22 and that question", but as far as the editorialising of 23 the different newspapers, whether it be the Mail, the 24 Telegraph or the Sun or whatever, I can tell you 25 I didn't spend a great deal of time reading them.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 53</p>	<p>1 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes. Mr Brown, periodically we give 2 the shorthand writer a break.</p> <p>3 A. Thank you very much.</p> <p>4 (11.30 am)</p> <p>5 (A short break)</p> <p>6 (11.39 am)</p> <p>7 MR JAY: Mr Brown, we're onto the issue of a phone call that 8 Mr Rupert Murdoch says took place. You'll recall his 9 evidence in relation to that.</p> <p>10 Can we look, please, first of all, at exhibit GB3B, 11 which is the last page of tab 4, which is a list of 12 telephone calls with Rupert Murdoch.</p> <p>13 A. Yes.</p> <p>14 Q. Can we understand, first of all, who has compiled this 15 list or what is the source of it?</p> <p>16 A. Any call I would have made with someone like 17 Rupert Murdoch would go through Downing Street. In 18 other words, there was a switchboard at Downing Street 19 which would take calls wherever I was in the world and 20 would link me up to whoever I wanted to speak to. So 21 any calls I had with Rupert Murdoch, or indeed anybody 22 else in this list, would have gone through Downing 23 Street and it is their list.</p> <p>24 Q. Thank you. Does this list include calls in, as it were, 25 as much as calls out?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 55</p>
<p>1 Q. Are we to interpret your evidence then -- and we're 2 going to come to a particular event in a moment -- that 3 really you received this news in relation to the news 4 with complete equanimity?</p> <p>5 A. It was very strange, because I had phoned up the editor 6 of the Sun on the afternoon of my conference speech. 7 You know, every time I did a conference speech, or did 8 a budget, I used to phone the political editors or the 9 editors of the newspaper to ask if they had any 10 questions arising from your speech, and sometimes they 11 had more questions than others. If it was an unpopular 12 budget, they would have lots of questions. If it was 13 a popular budget, less so, and when it was a conference 14 speech, I would phone them up.</p> <p>15 I phoned the editor of the Sun up that afternoon, as 16 I phoned the editor of the Times, of course, that 17 afternoon, and he had one or two questions for me about 18 Afghanistan, and I think this may be 5 o'clock in the 19 afternoon, and he didn't mention at all that the Sun was 20 making this decision and it was to be announced in two 21 hours. So if the editor of the Sun, you talk to him and 22 he doesn't tell you what's happening, there doesn't seem 23 to be much point in phoning anyone else at the Sun after 24 that. So I just left it.</p> <p>25 MR JAY: Is that a convenient moment?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 54</p>	<p>1 A. Yes. It would include a call that he had placed with 2 me, or anybody had placed it me, and a call that I had 3 placed to speak to anybody else, and it would include 4 calls that were transacted through a mobile phone as 5 well as through a fixed line phone, so it would include 6 any telephone conversation I had with someone like 7 Mr Murdoch.</p> <p>8 Q. When you were out of London, Mr Brown, was it ever your 9 practice to call out directly to someone, either from 10 your mobile phone or perhaps from a hotel phone?</p> <p>11 A. Not someone like Mr Murdoch. I would always go through 12 Downing Street because you would always want someone on 13 the phone call. You would want to have a record of what 14 was being said, and you would want to know exactly the 15 time you did the call and everything else. There's no 16 question that any phone call could have been made 17 without it going through this procedure.</p> <p>18 Q. May I turn that on its head and say that if for some 19 deliberate reason you didn't want there to be a record 20 of what was said, that might be a reason for arranging 21 the call to take place without going through Downing 22 Street?</p> <p>23 A. Well, I would never have done that. If I was calling 24 a newspaper proprietor or I was calling a political 25 leader around the world or calling someone about</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 56</p>

<p>1 a policy issue, I would always go through Downing Street</p> <p>2 because I would always want someone on the call to</p> <p>3 verify what happened. I don't think there's any doubt</p> <p>4 that that's the way that I did things, and that's the</p> <p>5 way that I think most people I know had been in the</p> <p>6 office that I'd been in would do things. So no call</p> <p>7 could have been made without it going through Downing</p> <p>8 Street in this way.</p> <p>9 Q. I'm just seeking to cover all possible options,</p> <p>10 Mr Brown.</p> <p>11 A. I understand that.</p> <p>12 Q. Did you have his number on your mobile phone?</p> <p>13 A. No. I wouldn't know Rupert Murdoch's phone number.</p> <p>14 I didn't engage in emailing or anything like that.</p> <p>15 There was one letter sent to him through an email, but</p> <p>16 it was sent through Downing Street. I wouldn't have any</p> <p>17 of the proprietors' numbers on my mobile phone. They</p> <p>18 would be mainly personal.</p> <p>19 Q. If we go to GB3B, we can see that there are two recorded</p> <p>20 phone calls in the year 2009, one in March, which is not</p> <p>21 relevant for our purposes, but one on 10 November 2009,</p> <p>22 which was 12.33 in the afternoon. Can you remember, was</p> <p>23 Mr Murdoch in New York on that occasion?</p> <p>24 A. I don't know where he was. I suspect he was in</p> <p>25 New York. I think he may have just come back from</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 57</p>	<p>1 someone said could be almost -- is totally illegible,</p> <p>2 yes.</p> <p>3 Q. Yes, although we have a transcription of it. I'm pretty</p> <p>4 sure I've seen one somewhere. The version we have at</p> <p>5 01917 is typed.</p> <p>6 There's another one, though, Mr Brown. 26 April,</p> <p>7 under tab 14 at page 01921.</p> <p>8 A. That's the handwritten one, I think. Yes. There's only</p> <p>9 three. One was November and the other two followed.</p> <p>10 Q. One was 5 April, which is only typed, one 26 April,</p> <p>11 which was handwritten, and the earlier one was December</p> <p>12 2009, so I think we've covered the three you've</p> <p>13 mentioned.</p> <p>14 Are you clear, Mr Brown, that you had no</p> <p>15 conversation with Mr Murdoch shortly after the</p> <p>16 withdrawal of support for you in the Sun, which was</p> <p>17 28 September 2009, in which you threatened to declare</p> <p>18 war on News International or uttered words to that</p> <p>19 effect?</p> <p>20 A. This is the conversation that Mr Murdoch says happened</p> <p>21 between him and me that -- where I threatened him and</p> <p>22 where I'm alleged to have acted in an unbalanced way.</p> <p>23 This conversation never took place. I'm shocked and</p> <p>24 surprised that it should be suggested, even when there's</p> <p>25 no evidence of such a conversation, that it should have</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 59</p>
<p>1 Australia. It was a call I placed because of what was</p> <p>2 happening over Afghanistan.</p> <p>3 Q. There's other surrounding evidence which bears on that</p> <p>4 call. In your exhibit GB1, under tab 2, at our</p> <p>5 page 14228, there's an email which you caused to be sent</p> <p>6 to Mr Murdoch on the evening of 10 November, which</p> <p>7 refers expressly to a telephone call you had earlier</p> <p>8 that day in relation to Afghanistan. Do you see that?</p> <p>9 A. Yes, that's absolutely right. I decided to follow up</p> <p>10 the phone call about Afghanistan with information that</p> <p>11 I thought would be of use to him about public support</p> <p>12 for the war in Afghanistan and what was actually</p> <p>13 happening to it, and I think it was originally sent as</p> <p>14 an email so he got it that day, but it was also sent as</p> <p>15 a letter to him. And there were two follow-up letters</p> <p>16 on Afghanistan, because there was a correspondence --</p> <p>17 three letters, one of which I think he submitted to this</p> <p>18 Inquiry, but three letters on Afghanistan over the next</p> <p>19 few months, and I may say that's the only time in</p> <p>20 government that I've ever had any letter communication</p> <p>21 with Mr Murdoch.</p> <p>22 Q. Yes. There was an email on 24 December 2009 in relation</p> <p>23 to Afghanistan, which is under our tab 2. Under our</p> <p>24 tab 14 -- this is Mr Murdoch's exhibit KRM 33 --</p> <p>25 A. I think that's mine. The famous handwriting, yes, which</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 58</p>	<p>1 happened. There was no such conversation. I decided</p> <p>2 after September 30, when the Conservative Party gained</p> <p>3 the support of the Sun, that there was no point in</p> <p>4 contacting them. As I said earlier, I'd never asked</p> <p>5 them for support directly, nor did I complain to them</p> <p>6 directly when they decided to support the Conservatives.</p> <p>7 So I didn't phone -- I didn't return calls to</p> <p>8 News International, I didn't phone Mr Murdoch, I didn't</p> <p>9 talk to his son, I didn't text him, I didn't email him,</p> <p>10 I didn't contact him. This was a matter that was done.</p> <p>11 There was no point in further communication about it at</p> <p>12 all, and I'm surprised that, first of all, there's</p> <p>13 a story that I sort of slammed the phone down on him,</p> <p>14 and secondly, there's now a story from Mr Murdoch</p> <p>15 himself that I threatened him. This did not happen.</p> <p>16 I have to say to you that there's no evidence it</p> <p>17 happened, other than Mr Murdoch's, but it didn't happen,</p> <p>18 because I didn't call him and I had no reason to want to</p> <p>19 call him, and I would not have called him, given</p> <p>20 everything I've said to you.</p> <p>21 Q. Finally on this point, so we're absolutely clear, one</p> <p>22 might say Mr Murdoch could be mistaken about the date</p> <p>23 and the call happened later. Is it possible that you</p> <p>24 might have uttered that sort of language during such</p> <p>25 a subsequent call?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 60</p>

15 (Pages 57 to 60)

<p>1 A. No, there is only one further telephone call and that is 2 in November. And if I may say, the sequence that led to 3 that call was on the Monday, the Sun had said that I'd 4 disrespected our troops by not bowing at the cenotaph. 5 On the same Monday, they said that I'd written a letter 6 with 25 misprints and had been discourteous to a woman 7 for whom I have the utmost sympathy, who was the mother 8 of a deceased soldier, and I could understand that she 9 was upset but they had claimed that I'd done things 10 I hadn't done.</p> <p>11 Then on the Tuesday, I had taken a phone call -- I'd 12 wanted to phone this lady to sympathise with her and to 13 explain that we thought a huge amount about her son and 14 his contribution to our country, that it may be little 15 comfort to get letters but it was important that she 16 knew how much the country valued the service of her son.</p> <p>17 The Sun had printed a partial version of that 18 conversation, which they had clearly had a mechanism for 19 taping which they shouldn't have had. The tape was in 20 their hands and it's very surprising for a conversation 21 with the Prime Minister and an ordinary member of the 22 public to appear in the Sun newspaper, but to appear in 23 this distorted way, with these headlines, "Bloody 24 shameful" and everything else ...</p> <p>25 I had concluded that the Sun were damaging our</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 61</p>	<p>1 He then asked me again, and for a third time, to 2 phone her, and I said, "Well, look, out of respect to 3 you, I will contact her", and that's how the 4 conversation ended, with me agreeing that I would talk 5 to her, and at the same time me sending the letter that 6 explained -- as you can see, it's completely and 7 entirely about Afghanistan and what was happening to 8 Afghanistan and that's what the call was about.</p> <p>9 You see, the problem about this is that I can see 10 why it may suit people to say now that there was some 11 pre-orchestrated campaign against News International and 12 that I was threatening on a phone call and this is the 13 justification, so this is nothing to do with telephone 14 hacking, it's all to do with some political campaign 15 against News International. But this call did not 16 happen. The threat was not made. I couldn't be 17 unbalanced on a call that I didn't have and a threat 18 that was not made, and I found it shocking that we 19 should get to this situation, sort of some time later, 20 when there is no evidence of this call happening at the 21 time that he says it happened, and you to be told under 22 oath that this was the case and to be backed up by other 23 people from News International who had been continuing 24 to make comments about such a position.</p> <p>25 Now, I think, because we're dealing with a very</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 63</p>
<p>1 effort in Afghanistan and they were now persuading 2 people who were actually in favour of the war that there 3 was no point in supporting the war. And Mr Murdoch had 4 always told me that he supported what we were doing in 5 Afghanistan and I felt he should be aware of the facts 6 and how we were losing public support at a difficult 7 time, when we were trying to persuade the Americans and 8 the rest of Europe that we had to have a collective 9 effort not just to get more Afghan troops on the ground 10 but also to get more European troops supporting these 11 Afghan troops on the ground. So it was a very delicate 12 political moment, so I phone him on that basis and that 13 was what the call was about. There was no reference to 14 threats or Conservative parties or anything. I'm quite 15 surprised.</p> <p>16 In fact, the conversation ended in a quite different 17 way from what he says, because he asked me, given that 18 he said that there should be no personal attacks by the 19 Sun due to Afghanistan, which he supported -- he asked 20 me would I phone Mrs Brooks, the editor of the -- would 21 I have a phone call with her, where she would, he 22 hinted, want to apologise for what had happened, and 23 I said I saw no point in phoning her because the Sun was 24 pursuing this course of action and it was for him to 25 talk to her.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 62</p>	<p>1 important issue, about the freedom of the press and 2 about the responsibility of the press and about whether 3 people had been either too hostile to News International 4 or too favourable to News International, it's important 5 that this is obviously cleared up. There is absolutely 6 no evidence for this phone call or for the threat or for 7 the judgment that Mr Murdoch made as a result of 8 something that he was never party to. The only call 9 that ever happened was in November, and it was about 10 Afghanistan, and it was weeks after when people allege 11 the call took place.</p> <p>12 Q. Mrs Brooks' account of the call that you mention, which 13 eventually you had with her on 10 November 2009 -- of 14 course, she was no longer editor of the Sun; she was now 15 chief executive of News International -- was that you 16 were angry and aggressive. Is that right or not?</p> <p>17 A. No, I don't think so, because I had come off a call with 18 Rupert Murdoch. I had written a letter to him about 19 Afghanistan, and out of respect to him I was phoning her 20 to hear what she had to say.</p> <p>21 Unfortunately, she wanted to tell me that the Sun 22 had got this tape of my phone call with Mrs James, who 23 was the very sad case of a lady whose son had died, and 24 she had a lot of questions to ask about this that I was 25 trying to help her with. But she tried to explain that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 64</p>

16 (Pages 61 to 64)

<p>1 they had got this tape -- which, of course, was very 2 unusual circumstances, as I say, for a tape of 3 a conversation from Downing Street to appear suddenly in 4 the Sun newspaper -- and she wanted to tell me that 5 they'd got this entirely lawfully and everything else 6 had been checked and so on and so forth, and that was 7 really what the nature of the call was, but I didn't get 8 the sense that there was an apology coming from the Sun 9 and I decided that there was no point in continuing the 10 conversation. But it ended without acrimony. It was 11 simply a conversation where she tried to tell me that 12 they'd got this information in totally appropriate ways.</p> <p>13 Q. It sounds as if, Mr Brown, you had every reason to be 14 angry and aggressive but you managed not to show it. Is 15 that the message you're communicating?</p> <p>16 A. I think that when things are very difficult, you tend to 17 be very calm indeed, and it was difficult because we 18 were going through a period where the whole Afghanistan 19 war effort was being, in a way, undermined by what 20 I thought was a campaign on the part of the Sun that was 21 alleging that we didn't care at all about our troops, 22 and it was this distortion of fact and opinion that 23 worried me, but on the other hand, I felt that the Sun's 24 position was that they should be supporting the war in 25 Afghanistan, and as my letters to Rupert Murdoch show,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 65</p>	<p>1 you take time to write him this personal handwritten 2 letter at all?</p> <p>3 A. Because Mr Murdoch had replied, and for the first time 4 Mr Murdoch had said, which he had never said to me 5 before, that he disagreed with the management of the war 6 effort.</p> <p>7 All my conversations with Mr Murdoch were perfectly 8 civilised and were courteous and, as you can see, 9 I wished him and his family well at the end of my 10 letters and everything else. And then suddenly, out of 11 the blue in our correspondence, he says, "I disagree 12 entirely with the management of the war effort", and 13 I felt that merited a reply. This was the first time 14 he'd said to me personally that this is what he thought. 15 I didn't understand what he meant by "the management of 16 the war effort", because we had put extra resources in, 17 and equally I've heard very little about complaints of 18 the management of the war effort since, and it seemed to 19 me that he was making a political point and I wanted him 20 to know that he had never said this before and that 21 I asked him to reconsider it.</p> <p>22 If you look at the letter, it says, "I'm surprised 23 to hear these views from you personally because you've 24 never said them to me in any conversation we've had and 25 would you like to reconsider these views?" And I said</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 67</p>
<p>1 I tried to persuade him by argument that this was the 2 right way to move forward, not by anything other than by 3 putting the facts to him.</p> <p>4 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I think that if I'd been persuaded to 5 phone somebody to listen to an apology and to be greeted 6 with the opportunity, as it were, to investigate further 7 a private conversation, I think I'd be rather irritated.</p> <p>8 A. I think in these circumstances, when you're surprised at 9 what comes back to you -- look, Mr Murdoch had given me 10 the impression that an apology was forthcoming. He also 11 gave me the assurance that the Sun were going to remove 12 this personal element of their attacks over Afghanistan. 13 I didn't ask him for these assurances; he offered them. 14 And I didn't discuss other issues with him, and 15 therefore to some extent that was where the conversation 16 lay, but it was really finding out that this was not 17 necessarily how the Sun was going to proceed that was 18 the surprise to me, but I don't think I was aggressive.</p> <p>19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Well, you might have a thicker skin 20 than I might have had.</p> <p>21 A. I think when you're dealing with some of these issues, 22 you tend to be calmer when you're dealing with them.</p> <p>23 MR JAY: The last letter you wrote to Mr Rupert Murdoch, the 24 handwritten one of 26 April 2010, was in the General 25 Election campaign. You had other things to do. Why did</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 66</p>	<p>1 to him, "Look, no matter what the Sun and the Times 2 does, I'm afraid I would rather have been an honest 3 one-term Prime Minister than a dishonest two-term 4 Prime Minister."</p> <p>5 Whatever happened, I said, "Look, we are pursuing 6 a campaign in Afghanistan that I believe is right. If 7 the Sun is undermining it, even though it says it's 8 supporting it, I have to tell you that that is the case, 9 but given that this is the first time you've criticised 10 the management of the war effort as an individual, I'd 11 like to know what you were thinking of when you did so", 12 and I didn't actually have a reply to that letter. He 13 didn't think it necessary to reply.</p> <p>14 Q. But isn't it obvious, Mr Brown, that you cared very much 15 about this? It was a personal attack on you and it 16 might be said to show that you do care deeply about what 17 newspapers write about you and about ad hominem attacks 18 of this sort.</p> <p>19 A. Look, there were two big issues during the period I was 20 Prime Minister. One was the global economic crisis, 21 which we had to deal with and we took extraordinary 22 action in Britain and I believe that we led the way, and 23 I feel that international leadership is something that 24 is needed. The second one was Afghanistan, where we 25 dealt with a hostile media, but at the same time we were</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 68</p>

<p>1 trying to prevent Taliban control in areas where the 2 Taliban are now in charge, I'm afraid, and it mattered 3 to me what was being done on Afghanistan and it mattered 4 to me that we got the policy right of persuading other 5 countries to contribute to the war effort and to 6 persuade people that we had to get the Afghan army and 7 police up and running.</p> <p>8 So these were not issues about me personally that 9 I was really trying to take up with Mr Murdoch. These 10 were issues of policy. So if you look at the letters -- 11 and I suspect that they could only be looked at now 12 because the sequence of them is now presumably available 13 to people -- you'll see that none of these letters refer 14 to the political views of Mr Murdoch or to the Sun or to 15 the News of the World or the Sunday Times. None of 16 that. It was all about the management of the war 17 effort, and I still feel to this day that huge damage 18 was done to the war effort by the suggestion that we 19 just didn't care about what was happening to our troops, 20 which clearly had an effect on public opinion and 21 clearly was something that I felt, as you can see, 22 strongly about.</p> <p>23 Q. I move off Mr Murdoch onto Mr Paul Dacre now and your 24 relationship with him. Some have described that as 25 personally close, although you weren't, of course, very</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 69</p>	<p>1 were chancellor, owing in part to your position on the 2 euro. Do you think that's a fair comment or not?</p> <p>3 A. I don't know whether it was. Look, one of the huge 4 dividing lines in British politics over the past 5 10 years has been the euro. Most of the newspapers, of 6 course, were against it.</p> <p>7 I was in a minority within our government for a very 8 long period of time of being sceptical about the euro. 9 My colleague, Ed Balls, who was the economic adviser to 10 the Treasury at the time and was later a Member of 11 Parliament, did this enormous amount of work that proved 12 to my satisfaction that the euro couldn't work, but it 13 was a hugely divisive issue. But if the Daily Mail 14 supported the objections that I had to the euro, then 15 that's absolutely understandable, but I'm afraid to say 16 on just about every other issue they were wholly against 17 us and they wanted to see a Conservative government, as 18 you know.</p> <p>19 Q. Were policies such as the u-turn on casinos, 20 reclassification of cannabis and the retreat on 24-hour 21 drinking attempts to appease the Daily Mail in your 22 view?</p> <p>23 A. No. If you look at each one of these individual 24 issues -- and I don't want to bore you with them -- 25 I personally have strong opinions, as an individual,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 71</p>
<p>1 often on the same page politically. Is that a fair 2 description?</p> <p>3 A. I didn't see Mr Dacre that much, as you can see from the 4 records. Mr Dacre and I disagreed about many things on 5 politics. I think he, like me, believes that there 6 should be an ethical basis for any political system and 7 that that is an issue that is not properly addressed 8 both in our media and in our politics, so there is sort 9 of common ground on that, even though we may disagree 10 about what that means in practice.</p> <p>11 He was personally very kind, as Rupert Murdoch could 12 be personally very kind, when we had difficulties with 13 our child, our first child, and I have not forgotten 14 that. But to be honest, I got no support from the 15 Daily Mail. The Daily Mail was totally against the 16 Labour Party, and when it came to the election, you may 17 see that I had a meeting with Lord Rothermere, as 18 I talked to Paul Dacre, and I said, "Look, you're 19 entering a situation where you have a party that's got 20 a relationship with the Murdoch empire and their 21 commercial interests and you should be very wary of it", 22 and I did warn them that that was one of the problems 23 that was going to happen.</p> <p>24 Q. Some have said, including Mr Alastair Campbell, that the 25 Daily Mail was less hostile to you personally when you</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 70</p>	<p>1 about the evil of excessive gambling. I thought that 2 the 24-hour licensing was causing us problems, and on 3 cannabis, you know, I don't hold what is probably the 4 more conventional view about the effects of soft drugs, 5 so I was against the reclassification of cannabis and in 6 fact we reclassified it back.</p> <p>7 These are views that I hold personally and I hold 8 them quite strongly and I may say that probably I used 9 my position to persuade members of the government who 10 were not as keen on that policy as I was.</p> <p>11 Q. Can I ask you, please, about section 55 of the Data 12 Protection Act, the Information Commissioner's two 13 reports in 2006.</p> <p>14 At that time, when you were still Chancellor of the 15 Exchequer, it didn't fall directly within your policy 16 area, but do you recall considering the issues raised by 17 them or not?</p> <p>18 A. Not in huge detail at the time, but it became an issue 19 after I became Prime Minister and we had to make 20 a judgment. It comes back to this very important point 21 that I think we discussed at the beginning about the 22 protections that are available for the press where there 23 is a public interest defence for actions that they may 24 have taken that might initially sound unacceptable.</p> <p>25 And, you know, in the press complaints code there</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 72</p>

<p>1 are these three public interest defences. One is about 2 exposing criminal wrongdoing, another is about threats 3 to the security and safety of the realm, and another is 4 a bit more, I think, difficult, about whether deception 5 by an organisation or individual is being exposed, and 6 I felt quite strongly -- and still do -- that there has 7 to be a public interest defence available in these 8 circumstances, and that was what the -- is basically my 9 own view about how you must have institutions outside 10 the state who have the power to question and hold 11 accountable the state, and no matter what we think about 12 the way that the media behaved in certain instances, 13 there is, in my view, a right to a public interest 14 defence.</p> <p>15 That's what we were debating after the Information 16 Commissioner made a number of proposals about data 17 protection, and I could understand the strength of 18 feeling that he brought to this, and therefore I was 19 anxious not to overrule him, but I could understand also 20 my own instinct that there had to be at least a public 21 interest defence in favour of the media where they had 22 ventured into areas where, for good public reasons, they 23 were exposing something that was wrong.</p> <p>24 Q. But following the consultation on the proposal to 25 introduce custodial sentences, the government's original</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 73</p>	<p>1 A. Yes.</p> <p>2 Q. He says:</p> <p>3 "About 18 months ago [he means on 10 September 2007] 4 I, Les Hinton of News International and Murdoch McLellan 5 of the Telegraph, had dinner with the Prime Minister 6 Gordon Brown. On the agenda was our deep concern that 7 the newspaper industry was facing a number of very 8 serious threats to its freedoms."</p> <p>9 Then he said: 10 "The fourth issue we raised with Gordon Brown was 11 a truly frightening amendment to the Data Protection 12 Act." 13 This is the amendment --</p> <p>14 A. I don't think there's any disagreement in these 15 accounts. He had it on his agenda for the meeting. 16 They raised it, but I told them as they raised it: 17 "Look, this is my view." I didn't say, "I'm waiting to 18 hear your view"; I told them: "This is my view." 19 I remember this distinctly. I had already made up my 20 mind before I went into the meeting, and I told Jack and 21 Michael that there should be a public interest defence 22 and that we should probably postpone the implementation 23 of this clause.</p> <p>24 Look, at that time, of course, we didn't have all 25 the information we now have about the abuse of this --</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 75</p>
<p>1 position -- and this is when you were in charge -- was 2 to introduce such custodial sentences, and Mr Jack Straw 3 gave us evidence about it.</p> <p>4 A. Yes.</p> <p>5 Q. There was a dinner you had with Messrs Hinton, McLellan 6 and Dacre on 10 September 2007.</p> <p>7 A. That's right.</p> <p>8 Q. Which we have in tab 34 of this bundle. Do you remember 9 the issue being discussed on that occasion?</p> <p>10 A. I remember the issue. I told them, as we started the 11 dinner, what my own view was. I didn't ask them for 12 their view, I'm afraid. Maybe I should have. I told 13 them what my view was, that there should be a public 14 interest defence, and therefore it wasn't a question of 15 them lobbying me. I was informing them that this was my 16 view, but that Michael Wills, who was an excellent 17 minister, and Jack Straw, who was doing a great job on 18 this, were consulting people about how we could 19 implement this in a way where there was a public 20 interest defence but we weren't going to back off 21 entirely the potential need for legislation.</p> <p>22 Q. Mr Dacre's account doesn't quite match that, Mr Brown. 23 Under tab 34, he gave a speech to the Society of Editors 24 conference on 9 November 2008. So it's about 16, 17 25 months after the relevant date.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 74</p>	<p>1 of data by the media. At that time, there was no 2 suggestion that there was anything other than what was 3 called the rogue hacker. But again, my instinct is 4 still the same, that there ought to be a public interest 5 defence. I know it's uncomfortable, because you are 6 balancing off two freedoms, as we said at the beginning. 7 You have this right that I would defend for people to 8 have privacy, and you have this right of the media, 9 I would say the individual, to express themselves and 10 for the media to do this through a freedom of speech and 11 therefore a willingness or ability to investigate things 12 that are wrong, and you are balancing off these two 13 freedoms.</p> <p>14 It seemed to me that we may end up with the 15 custodial sentences, and that was an option that was 16 left to us. We said we'd come back to this, but at that 17 time we thought that -- let us look at whether a public 18 interest defence can be introduced into this 19 legislation, which is what we did.</p> <p>20 Now, these are very, very difficult issues, and 21 I thought about them at the time, I've thought about 22 them since. I would still hold to the idea of a public 23 interest defence, but I think we're now on a course 24 where there will almost certainly be custodial 25 sentences. But I think as the government of the day has</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 76</p>

<p>1 said, they want to rely on your final judgment on this</p> <p>2 as well, before they make a decision.</p> <p>3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes, it's quite important to be quite</p> <p>4 careful about this. What the data protection amendment</p> <p>5 did was to introduce a public interest defence to data</p> <p>6 protection offences.</p> <p>7 A. Yes.</p> <p>8 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But it wasn't for a moment suggesting</p> <p>9 in relation to other breaches of the criminal law that</p> <p>10 there should be a public interest defence.</p> <p>11 A. No, it was in relation to Data Protection Act; you're</p> <p>12 absolutely right.</p> <p>13 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Correct.</p> <p>14 A. I hope I'm not overelaborating on the argument, but it</p> <p>15 seemed in that instance there was a case for a public</p> <p>16 interest defence.</p> <p>17 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I understand. But you're not</p> <p>18 suggesting -- or are you suggesting, an open question --</p> <p>19 that there should be a public interest defence in</p> <p>20 relation to any crime?</p> <p>21 A. No, I'm not saying that, but what I am saying is that</p> <p>22 I do think that the press -- you're looking again at the</p> <p>23 Press Complaints Council guidelines and one of these</p> <p>24 guidelines -- I think it's the editors' rules --</p> <p>25 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Code.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 77</p>	<p>1 would suggest going further than that. Of course, the</p> <p>2 fact that the defence can't be made out doesn't mean</p> <p>3 that everybody who is convicted then goes directly to</p> <p>4 jail. There are an enormous number of variations that</p> <p>5 will always be taken into account.</p> <p>6 A. Yes. I think maybe I've been misunderstood. My</p> <p>7 position was in relation to the Data Protection Act, but</p> <p>8 I was conscious that there was a public interest set of</p> <p>9 issues raised in the Editors' Code and it seemed to me</p> <p>10 this was reasonable.</p> <p>11 MR JAY: Mr Dacre's account is that you were hugely</p> <p>12 sympathetic to the industry's case and promised to do</p> <p>13 what you could to help. It sounds as if the industry,</p> <p>14 through Mr Dacre, Mr Hinton and Mr McLellan, were</p> <p>15 allowed to put their case and you were persuaded by it;</p> <p>16 is that fair or not?</p> <p>17 A. I distinctly remember this conversation and I think</p> <p>18 Mr Dacre, if you asked him under cross-examination,</p> <p>19 would confirm that at the beginning of that discussion,</p> <p>20 I said, "Look, I am persuaded that we need this public</p> <p>21 interest defence and we've been talking about how we can</p> <p>22 do this."</p> <p>23 I'd also, I think, either before or after, made a</p> <p>24 speech on liberty. I think I've sent you an extract</p> <p>25 from it. I felt that the debate in Britain had become</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 79</p>
<p>1 A. -- suggests that there is a public interest at stake</p> <p>2 where three things are in issue that have to be taken</p> <p>3 into account when judgments are made.</p> <p>4 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: That's --</p> <p>5 A. Yes, of course.</p> <p>6 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: -- entirely right.</p> <p>7 A. And I bore that in mind as well when I was looking at</p> <p>8 this issue.</p> <p>9 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: That's a defence to an allegation of</p> <p>10 breach of the code.</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Let me ask you this, again in an</p> <p>13 entirely open way. Of course, in relation to any</p> <p>14 criminal offence, if a journalist is acting in the</p> <p>15 public interest or reasonably believes that he or she is</p> <p>16 acting in the public interest, then that must be an</p> <p>17 important feature. It's why I asked the</p> <p>18 Director of Public Prosecutions whether he would be</p> <p>19 prepared to consider publishing a policy on his approach</p> <p>20 to the public interest in relation to prosecution of</p> <p>21 journalists for a crime where there is no statutory</p> <p>22 defence, and as you know, he's done so and he's</p> <p>23 consulted on it.</p> <p>24 A. Yes.</p> <p>25 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I'm just keen to know whether you</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 78</p>	<p>1 coloured by what we'd had to do in relation to</p> <p>2 terrorism, and you know that it was very controversial,</p> <p>3 that we wanted to have, for example, a longer period of</p> <p>4 potential detention for people who were terrorist</p> <p>5 suspects. But I felt, on a whole range of other areas</p> <p>6 where liberty was an issue, we could do better. We</p> <p>7 could do better about the freedom of assembly, we could</p> <p>8 do better about the freedom of speech, we could do</p> <p>9 better about the freedom of the press. So I made</p> <p>10 a speech on liberty.</p> <p>11 Now, these were my views. These were not the</p> <p>12 media's views. These were not Mr Dacre's views. These</p> <p>13 were not anybody else's views. These were my views. It</p> <p>14 was an issue that I felt strongly about. I felt that</p> <p>15 America branded itself to the world as a country of</p> <p>16 liberty and was able to persuade people that liberty was</p> <p>17 invented in America. In fact, the ideas of liberties</p> <p>18 that lay behind the British constitution and some of the</p> <p>19 things that we valued greatly had originated in Britain</p> <p>20 and I wanted to make that clear.</p> <p>21 So these were my views and I think any suggestion</p> <p>22 that I was under pressure from the industry and yielded</p> <p>23 to it is quite ridiculous. I was prepared to say that</p> <p>24 this is my view and I'm still prepared to say that it's</p> <p>25 my view.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 80</p>

<p>1 Q. Were you aware that there already was a public interest 2 defence in Section 55 of the Data Protection Act?</p> <p>3 A. Yes.</p> <p>4 Q. The speech you referred to, 25 October 2007 under 5 tab 3 -- this obviously postdates the dinner we're 6 referring to by about six weeks.</p> <p>7 A. Yes.</p> <p>8 Q. Arguably, if you look at the second paragraph of the 9 speech --</p> <p>10 A. What tab is that?</p> <p>11 Q. It's tab 3, page 14235.</p> <p>12 A. I think I remember what I said.</p> <p>13 Q. You're still referring there to taking into account --</p> <p>14 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I think it is behind tab 3 of 15 volume 1.</p> <p>16 A. I have the wrong volume. That's a fundamental mistake.</p> <p>17 MR JAY: Confusingly, Mr Brown, although it's the second 18 page of the speech, it bears the number 6 on the top 19 right.</p> <p>20 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I think it's an extract from the 21 speech.</p> <p>22 A. It's not the full speech. I wouldn't want to bore you 23 with all the detail.</p> <p>24 Q. Towards the bottom you say:</p> <p>25 "But Jack Straw has asked the Information</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 81</p>	<p>1 MR JAY: It's also noteworthy in this speech that you said, 2 towards the top of this same page:</p> <p>3 "No case for statutory regulation of the press. 4 Self-regulation of the press should be maintained."</p> <p>5 A. Yes.</p> <p>6 Q. In other words, the status quo is adequate. Is that 7 correct?</p> <p>8 A. We had no mandate for that. We had never proposed that 9 that should happen. I think Tony Blair explained in his 10 own evidence that we had decided that this was not 11 a priority for us, so it was not part of our mandate and 12 therefore it was obvious that that was not what we were 13 doing.</p> <p>14 Q. So is your evidence that you didn't respond to the 15 lobbying of you at dinner on 10 September 2007 and 16 modify the government's existing proposals to take into 17 account of a powerful press view?</p> <p>18 A. I felt strongly about this myself. I'm not sure that 19 every other minister felt as strongly as I did, but I've 20 explained the background to my own views. So I really 21 didn't need persuading by Mr Dacre about this. This 22 was -- or by Mr Hinton or who else was there, I don't 23 know.</p> <p>24 Q. But is it your evidence that you had a conversation with 25 Mr Straw before 10 September 2007 in which your</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 83</p>
<p>1 Commissioner to produce guidance in consultation with 2 the PCC to make sure we take into account concerns about 3 the new rules which allow for a prison sentence of up to 4 two years."</p> <p>5 So at that point, was your thinking still that will 6 a custodial sentence was appropriate?</p> <p>7 A. Yes, I think the issue was whether we would trigger the 8 two-year sentence at a later stage, while leaving it in 9 the legislation.</p> <p>10 Q. That didn't come as an idea until March of 2008 --</p> <p>11 A. Yes.</p> <p>12 Q. -- from documents we have at tab 28.</p> <p>13 A. Yes.</p> <p>14 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: What you're saying here is that clear 15 guidance will make sure legitimate investigative 16 journalism is not impeded. So you're very keen to 17 protect legitimate investigative journalism, but where 18 that is not triggered, then there should be a sanction 19 to protect individual privacy?</p> <p>20 A. Yes.</p> <p>21 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: That's precisely what you're saying.</p> <p>22 A. I say:</p> <p>23 "... but the sanctions provide a strong deterrent to 24 protect individual privacy."</p> <p>25 Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 82</p>	<p>1 scepticism was communicated?</p> <p>2 A. I think we were having conversations quite a lot about 3 some of these things. I mean, these are things that 4 arise from time to time. I don't think there was any 5 formal meeting about it, but I think we were having 6 conversations.</p> <p>7 Q. But his evidence was along the lines that, owing to time 8 pressures with the criminal justice and immigration 9 bill -- it had could come in before 7 or 8 May 2008 -- 10 a rapid compromise was carved up, as it were, and that 11 process started in March 2008. Do you recall that?</p> <p>12 A. I recall conversations with Mr Michael Wills, who was 13 the minister, and Jack Straw, who was the minister, and 14 I had this view that we could find a way forward and 15 I think in the end we did.</p> <p>16 Q. We turn now to the issue of special advisers.</p> <p>17 A. Yes.</p> <p>18 Q. I'm asked to put to you a number of questions about 19 them. Mr Campbell, in his second witness statement at 20 paragraph 64, suggested there was a real problem with 21 a Treasury special adviser, and by that he means 22 Mr Whelan, who was one of your appointments. Do you 23 agree with his analysis?</p> <p>24 A. Look, there was tittle tattle, rumour, gossip. 25 Political advisers, there's lots of them around, they're</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 84</p>

<p>1 having debates and arguments.</p> <p>2 The one thing I insisted upon -- and I think this</p> <p>3 deals with this point about Mr Campbell -- is our</p> <p>4 political advisers worked through the head of</p> <p>5 communications, who was a civil servant, so anything</p> <p>6 that they did in relation to the press they had to</p> <p>7 report to and through the head of the civil -- the civil</p> <p>8 servant head of our communications, and that's how we</p> <p>9 dealt with these issues.</p> <p>10 Q. But were not Messrs Whelan and McBride systematic</p> <p>11 perpetrators of selective anonymous briefings, either at</p> <p>12 your instigation or with your knowledge?</p> <p>13 A. No, I wouldn't say that at all. I mean, I operated or</p> <p>14 asked them to operate under these rules, that they would</p> <p>15 work to their head of communications, who was a civil</p> <p>16 servant, and he would have to report to me if things</p> <p>17 were wrong.</p> <p>18 Q. So if they did indulge in this behaviour, that would be,</p> <p>19 by definition, without your knowledge; is that correct?</p> <p>20 A. It would be without my knowledge and without my</p> <p>21 sanction.</p> <p>22 Q. Okay, we'll come back to that.</p> <p>23 Mrs Brooks, in her witness statement, paragraph 61,</p> <p>24 states that Tony Blair and his aides were convinced that</p> <p>25 Gordon Brown and his aides had conspired together in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 85</p>	<p>1 we changed the system when we went to Number 10 and why</p> <p>2 I thought it was better to have -- political advisers</p> <p>3 were a new development from the 1970s onwards. You had</p> <p>4 always worked with civil servants without political</p> <p>5 advisers. You bring in political advisers and they're</p> <p>6 obviously party people with their own views about what</p> <p>7 should happen. They had to find a way of working with</p> <p>8 the Civil Service, and my insistence was that the</p> <p>9 political advisers, who were doing a job, had to work</p> <p>10 under the auspices of the Civil Service head. This is</p> <p>11 what we tried to enact in the Treasury, and this is why,</p> <p>12 when I went to Downing Street, I removed the order in</p> <p>13 council, I said that we would not have a political</p> <p>14 appointee as head of communications, I appointed</p> <p>15 a traditional -- a conventional civil servant as the</p> <p>16 head of communications and then, when he retired and</p> <p>17 went back to the Treasury -- and incidentally went back</p> <p>18 to perform a policy job which he now does for the new</p> <p>19 government, which is of a different political colour --</p> <p>20 I appointed the person who had been previously head of</p> <p>21 communications at Buckingham Palace, who was not, in</p> <p>22 a sense, a career civil servant, but one who was trusted</p> <p>23 absolutely for both his discretion and his propriety.</p> <p>24 So I wanted to send a message that we wanted to work</p> <p>25 within these traditional channels and political advisers</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 87</p>
<p>1 order to force his early resignation. Do you agree with</p> <p>2 that analysis?</p> <p>3 A. I don't think that's Tony Blair's view and it's</p> <p>4 certainly not my view. This is -- again, you're relying</p> <p>5 on second-hand conversations that are reported by people</p> <p>6 who are not participants in the events, so I don't take</p> <p>7 that as a serious comment about what happened.</p> <p>8 Q. But were your aides involved in using the media to force</p> <p>9 or attempt to force Mr Blair's resignation? This was in</p> <p>10 2006.</p> <p>11 A. I would hope not.</p> <p>12 Q. But were they involved?</p> <p>13 A. Well, I would hope not. I have no evidence of that.</p> <p>14 Q. Mr Blair said that he didn't know whether you,</p> <p>15 Mr Whelan, Mr McBride and Mr Balls were briefing against</p> <p>16 him in the media. Did you authorise your aides to brief</p> <p>17 against Mr Blair?</p> <p>18 A. No.</p> <p>19 Q. Do you think they may have done so without your explicit</p> <p>20 approval, even with your knowledge?</p> <p>21 A. If they did so, it was without my authorisation.</p> <p>22 Q. But it's the role of an aide or special adviser only to</p> <p>23 act with your express or implied authority; would you</p> <p>24 agree?</p> <p>25 A. No, I made it clear -- I mean, I'm trying to explain why</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 86</p>	<p>1 were instructed to do exactly that. Now, if they</p> <p>2 failed, as happened in a terrible instance where</p> <p>3 Mr McBride had to resign, then they had to go.</p> <p>4 Q. Did you instruct your special advisers at the Treasury</p> <p>5 and at Number 10, while you were Prime Minister, to</p> <p>6 conduct off-the-record briefings with the press?</p> <p>7 A. No, but if the Civil Service head of communications was</p> <p>8 informed, then that was the way that anything would have</p> <p>9 to be done in relation to briefings. So there would</p> <p>10 have to be some communication between him and any</p> <p>11 political advisor if the press was being talked to.</p> <p>12 It's unrealistic to expect that a political adviser is</p> <p>13 never going to talk to the press. I think they had to</p> <p>14 go through the Civil Service head.</p> <p>15 Q. Lord Mandelson's book, page 461, states, describing</p> <p>16 Mr McBride as your attack dog:</p> <p>17 "... had developed a reputation for briefing against</p> <p>18 anyone who was perceived to threaten his boss'</p> <p>19 interests, not only the Tory opposition but those of the</p> <p>20 Blairite persuasion."</p> <p>21 Is Lord Mandelson correct or incorrect about that?</p> <p>22 A. This is what I mean about tittle-tattle. You know, you</p> <p>23 have gossip, rumour, innuendo. You have people saying</p> <p>24 something about someone else. I don't know the truth of</p> <p>25 all these things, but what I can say is that the people</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 88</p>

22 (Pages 85 to 88)

<p>1 that worked for me were under specific guidance about 2 what they had to do, and I think that's an important 3 point in this. Were the rules there? And there were 4 rules. Were they observed? In one very bad case, they 5 were not observed and the person had to go. 6 Q. He also notes a conversation he says he had with you in 7 October 2008, when you invited him back into government, 8 when he specifically raised the issue of Damian McBride 9 with you and reached what he thought was a clear 10 understanding that he would be transferred to the 11 Cabinet Office as a stepping stone to departing 12 altogether. Is Lord Mandelson's recollection correct 13 about that or not? 14 A. I think Peter was -- did not like Mr McBride. I don't 15 think there's any doubt about that from -- this is the 16 first time I've read this, by the way. This appears to 17 be in his memoirs. 18 But I can't remember -- Mr McBride was pushed back 19 from a front line role and he was given a new role, but 20 unfortunately in this new role he made a very bad 21 mistake and he had to go. That's, I think, what 22 happened. He wasn't doing his original role; he'd been 23 pushed back to another role. I don't think it was in 24 the Cabinet Office, I think it was still at Number 10, 25 but he had to go.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 89</p>	<p>1 Q. You were also warned by Ed Miliband and Douglas 2 Alexander about Mr McBride? 3 A. When I say there was a general view, I'm not excluding 4 the fact that one or two people might have talked about 5 it to me, but the fact is he was moved from his original 6 role and he was moved back and then we had this incident 7 where he had to go. 8 I may say that Mr McBride was a career civil 9 servant. He had worked his way up through Customs and 10 Excise and the Treasury. He only became a political 11 adviser in 2005. He was originally a fast-track civil 12 servant. 13 Q. There's also evidence that Jacqui Smith warned you about 14 him as well. Do you remember that? 15 A. Oh, I can't remember all these things. 16 Q. It sounds as if a lot of peopling warning you about 17 Mr McBride, but did you heed their warnings? 18 A. What is material to this, I suspect, is you're wanting 19 to understand what the relationship between political 20 advisers and ministers is and how it worked itself 21 through. I can only say this: that I was aware that we 22 had to move Mr McBride from his original role to a new 23 role. He had been moved into that new role and then we 24 had this incident and he had to go. That's how it 25 worked.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 91</p>
<p>1 Q. But I'm back on October 2008 and I was just wondering 2 whether you agree or disagree with Lord Mandelson's 3 recollection in his memoirs of what he says -- 4 A. I don't think there's any doubt that Mr Mandelson didn't 5 want Mr McBride, but I don't think there was any talk 6 about Cabinet Office. I think we probably talked about 7 how Mr McBride was moving back from what you might call 8 the front line and he had a different role, but in the 9 end it was only a few months later that he had to go. 10 Q. Did either or both of Gus O'Donnell and Jeremy Hayward 11 warn you specifically about Mr McBride? 12 A. I don't remember in specific documentation or letters. 13 They may have said something in conversations. 14 Q. But did they, in the course of conversation, warn you 15 about Mr McBride? 16 A. I don't know whether you're talking about what happened 17 in the leaking of these emails. They certainly would 18 have talked to me about that when it happened, but I was 19 very clearly of my I own mind that he had to go. 20 Q. No, I'm talking about an earlier warning -- 21 A. I don't recall other conversations. Perhaps you have 22 better information from these people than I have, but 23 I don't recall any conversations about that. There was 24 a general view that some of them had that Mr McBride had 25 to change his role.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 90</p>	<p>1 Q. Did you instruct Mr Whelan to brief specifically against 2 Mr Darling when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer? 3 A. Not at all. Not under any circumstances. 4 Q. You've seen the extract from Mr Darling's memoirs called 5 "Back from the Brink", in which he's convinced that you 6 did. Are you aware of that? 7 A. Yes, but I didn't. I think this issue about "Back from 8 the Brink", which again, I only read for the first time 9 yesterday, this extract, is about an interview that 10 Alastair gave to the Guardian, and I think the issue was 11 he had been quoted as saying that he thought this was 12 the worst crisis for the British economy for 60 years, 13 when actually what he wanted to say or had said was that 14 this was the worst global crisis for 60 years, and he 15 told me that he wanted to go out and tell the media that 16 that was the case. I mean, that's the incident. 17 I don't think there was any disagreement about the 18 interpretation. 19 Q. Do you remember a conversation that you had with 20 Mr Darling, which is noted in his book at page 108, 21 where he told you specifically that he knew where the 22 anonymous briefings were coming from and that they had 23 to stop? 24 A. I don't know. There may have been a conversation like 25 that. I -- you know, this conversation within</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 92</p>

23 (Pages 89 to 92)

<p>1 government, everybody worries about who is saying what 2 about whom and so on and so forth. The one thing I can 3 say to you, which is absolutely clear -- and I'm not 4 sure how relevant this is to your conclusions, but the 5 one thing I can say to you definitely is that nobody in 6 my position would have instructed any briefing against 7 a senior minister, and Alastair Darling was a friend of 8 mine as well as a colleague. 9 Q. There's reference as well -- it's not clear that these 10 were the words he uttered to you -- to Henry II's 11 utterings about Thomas Becket: "Will no one rid me of 12 this meddlesome priest?" 13 Then he says: 14 "He didn't order his knights to go and kill Becket 15 but they believed that they had his blessing to do." 16 Is that near the mark or not? 17 A. These sound very dramatic comments. No, they're not 18 near the mark at all. Quite wrong and quite the 19 opposite of what actually happened. 20 I think, if I may say, on the incident that you're 21 referring to, there was an interview given to the 22 Guardian and it was about the economic crisis and 23 Alastair was sure that he'd talked about the global 24 economic crisis and the Guardian had reported it as 25 being about the British economic crisis, and of course Page 93</p>	<p>1 who was blamed for giving him it. These things happen 2 in politics. People say things and do things and the 3 press says things. I don't recall anything about this 4 at all and I've never sort of been involved in 5 a briefing operation against John Major. 6 Q. Is the position this, Mr Brown: that a sort of mythology 7 has built up around these special advisers, described in 8 certain quarters as paranoid attack dogs, or whatever, 9 but there's no evidential basis for it? Or is it the 10 position that if they did act in this way, it was 11 without your authority and instructions? 12 A. Look, you have special advisers. They're part of the 13 government machine now. They're a new innovation. They 14 have a role to play in defending the minister and 15 defending the policy. You have competition between 16 special advisers in different departments because that's 17 the nature of politics. You have competition, 18 unfortunately, between ministers and departments, and 19 that's the nature of politics. The question is what you 20 read into this, as whether there's an abuse of the 21 constitution. 22 I asked my political advisers to operate under very 23 distinct rules, and I actually had tougher rules than 24 was the general rule that was applied to political 25 advisers. After Mr McBride left, we toughened up the Page 95</p>
<p>1 the distinction was important but there was no tape of 2 the interview, the Treasury had no tape of the 3 interview, and that was the source of the problem, that 4 we couldn't get to the bottom of it because the Treasury 5 had not taken a tape, and I think that was the source of 6 the issue. 7 Q. I've also shown you a letter from Sir John Major, who of 8 course is giving evidence tomorrow. It's dated 30 June 9 2008. He will, of course, give evidence about it but it 10 relates to the withdrawal of the Mugabe knighthood. He 11 makes the specific allegation that you briefed or you 12 instructed either Mr Whelan or Mr McBride -- he isn't 13 named specifically -- to brief against Sir John Major. 14 Is that correct or not? 15 A. Mr Whelan was not, working for us at that time at all, 16 and Mr McBride -- I don't know which year you're 17 referring to. 18 Q. This was June 2008. 19 A. This was before he had gone. I don't know anything 20 about this, because I don't think, despite the fact that 21 my name is mentioned in this letter, Gus O'Donnell and 22 I talked about this in any detail, and I don't really 23 know much about this incident. I mean, I know that 24 Mugabe lost his knighthood. I doubt that when 25 Sir Fred Goodwin lost his knighthood, I was the person Page 94</p>	<p>1 rules even more about the use of equipment and 2 everything for personal purposes, and I was determined 3 that we could integrate the political advisers into the 4 Civil Service system. 5 If it didn't work on occasion and if people behaved 6 badly on occasion, then that is not because there were 7 not rules that were there and instructions that were 8 given by me that should be followed, but I think we now 9 know enough about the nature of politics to know that 10 there's rumour, there's gossip, there's innuendo, 11 there's gossip and so on and so forth. 12 The question is what you conclude from this. My 13 conclusion is that you need tough rules that people have 14 to follow, and if people don't obey the rules, then then 15 have to go. I'm not sure if gives us a general insight 16 into the way the media was behaving. 17 Q. Well, the focus of this Inquiry is rightly, under its 18 terms of reference, the culture, practices and ethics of 19 the press. 20 A. Yes. 21 Q. But we're also looking at the conduct of each and 22 therefore the culture of the political class. 23 A. Yes. 24 Q. Are there any lessons to be learnt at all, if one looks 25 at the period 1997 to 2010, which is a 13-year period, Page 96</p>

<p>1 as to the culture of the political class?</p> <p>2 A. Yes. As I said right at the beginning -- and I don't</p> <p>3 know if you picked me up in the way that I might have</p> <p>4 expected. I said that we should have changed the lobby</p> <p>5 system and changed the system where people relied on</p> <p>6 exclusive briefings and had a far more open and</p> <p>7 transparent system of addressing the country through the</p> <p>8 press than we have even today, and I obviously have to</p> <p>9 take some responsibility for this. My only defence in</p> <p>10 this is that I tried after 2007 to change the rules.</p> <p>11 We actually have a consultation, by the way --</p> <p>12 I didn't mention this -- about the future of the lobby,</p> <p>13 which Simon Lewis, who is a very honourable man, led,</p> <p>14 but we could find no consensus amongst the media about</p> <p>15 what could be done, and of course it was getting very</p> <p>16 near a General Election. But I would have preferred to</p> <p>17 have open briefings that were given by ministers to</p> <p>18 inform the press day by day. I'd looked at the White</p> <p>19 House system, I'd looked at other systems.</p> <p>20 So yes, there needed to be more openness. We</p> <p>21 inherited a system that was based on, if you like,</p> <p>22 exclusivity. It was also based on insiders winning over</p> <p>23 outsiders, so a lot of people were excluded from that</p> <p>24 system. The political advisers ought to and had to work</p> <p>25 under specific guidance and I believe they should have</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 97</p>	<p>1 A. The guidelines were, as I said, that they had to go</p> <p>2 through the official head of communications, who was</p> <p>3 a civil servant, and this is an issue that will have to</p> <p>4 be resolved at some stage because we've had political</p> <p>5 appointees as press offices and you cannot say that it's</p> <p>6 worked in its entirety. We've had civil servant</p> <p>7 appointees and it hasn't been wholly satisfactory</p> <p>8 because of what the press expects of the head of</p> <p>9 communications. I don't think we have an answer yet to</p> <p>10 what is a real problem about how you deal with the press</p> <p>11 on a day-to-day basis, but I would prefer a more open</p> <p>12 system, and I think that we will get to that at some</p> <p>13 point, and if your Inquiry, sir, can take us further on</p> <p>14 these roads and call for greater openness and</p> <p>15 transparency, I would welcome that.</p> <p>16 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Have you thought about how that might</p> <p>17 manifest itself?</p> <p>18 A. I would have thought that you move away from the daily</p> <p>19 briefings that is to what's called the lobby -- this</p> <p>20 will be very unpopular with people who are now in the</p> <p>21 gallery listening to me, some of whom are in the</p> <p>22 lobby -- that you would have someone who was briefing</p> <p>23 with the television cameras there, so it would be</p> <p>24 completely open. You would have to allow in press that</p> <p>25 are not part of the lobby system at the moment -- and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 99</p>
<p>1 worked under Civil Service leadership and we changed</p> <p>2 that when we went into Number 10 as well. So these are</p> <p>3 the lessons I learned about what some people call the</p> <p>4 spin culture.</p> <p>5 I come back to the point that it assumes a great</p> <p>6 deal of success in dealings with the media that I don't</p> <p>7 feel that I had. You know, in the 1970s, when I was</p> <p>8 a student, I read once that it was said the Shah of</p> <p>9 Persia, when he was still the Shah of Iran, had the</p> <p>10 worst press relations in the business and a British</p> <p>11 politician had raised an objection because his were</p> <p>12 somewhat worse than that, and I felt that if that had</p> <p>13 been said in the 1990s and up to 2010, I would have</p> <p>14 raised that objection.</p> <p>15 I did not have, unfortunately, good relations with</p> <p>16 the press, and I used to say myself about spinning --</p> <p>17 when people said, you know: "You guys are got good at</p> <p>18 getting your message across", I used to quote Shelley</p> <p>19 when Shelley was talking about a relative of his. He</p> <p>20 said he had lost the art of communication but not, alas,</p> <p>21 the gift of speech. I felt that I had got myself into a</p> <p>22 position like that before I finished office.</p> <p>23 Q. Did you, incidentally, issue any guidelines to your</p> <p>24 special advisers, either at the Treasury or at</p> <p>25 Number 10, or were they just left to get on with it?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 98</p>	<p>1 that includes, of course, the new Internet media that is</p> <p>2 developing -- and I think the Civil Service and the</p> <p>3 politicians have to work out a better relationship so --</p> <p>4 the danger is you have a Civil Service head that people</p> <p>5 think does not speak to behalf of the Prime Minister or</p> <p>6 the minister because he's not close enough, but the</p> <p>7 danger is you have an overpoliticised head who looks as</p> <p>8 if he or she is pushing the Civil Service in</p> <p>9 a particular direction.</p> <p>10 So I think you have this dilemma about how you</p> <p>11 organise the management of information, but I think the</p> <p>12 openness of it is much to be welcomed, and as I say to</p> <p>13 you, we did try to return to a situation where when you</p> <p>14 made an announcement in the House of Commons it was new</p> <p>15 information, and we did try to return to a situation</p> <p>16 where you made a speech and you were giving the</p> <p>17 information for the first time. But I'm afraid that the</p> <p>18 way things worked, these things were not reported. They</p> <p>19 were not seen as news in this highly competitive</p> <p>20 business in the media unless someone either had an</p> <p>21 exclusive or a group of people had an exclusive to these</p> <p>22 stories and felt that that was something that was news.</p> <p>23 So this competition between the different media</p> <p>24 outlets is intensifying, obviously. 24-hour news is</p> <p>25 a reality. Newspapers are in danger of being left</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 100</p>

25 (Pages 97 to 100)

<p>1 behind because they publish at a certain time, whereas 2 the Internet is going all the time, and this will only 3 intensify. Therefore I think more openness is an 4 essential element of it, but of course the 5 trustworthiness of participants is important to this as 6 well.</p> <p>7 MR JAY: May I just touch on Mr Watson now, a different 8 topic.</p> <p>9 A. Yes.</p> <p>10 Q. You address this at page 16 of your statement, our 11 page 14222. Can I just be clear what your evidence is 12 about this. You say that you can recall telling 13 Mr Watson that the government had been under pressure 14 from News International to sack him. Are we, back here, 15 in 2006 in relation to the plot to dethrone Mr Blair, or 16 are we --</p> <p>17 A. I think we're talking about a conversation that you've 18 asked me about that Mr Watson had with me in 2010 19 Mr Watson has phoned me up and he's asking me what's 20 happening, and I remind him of what happened in the 21 past. I'm not giving him new information, as far as I'm 22 concerned, about something that happened in the last 23 week. I'm telling him: "Look, you know when you were in 24 government that News International had editorials, that 25 they wanted you sacked, but you also know" -- and I did</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 101</p>	<p>1 News International had made it clear that they wanted-- 2 they didn't like him, of course, and I think they had 3 editorials saying that Tom Watson had to go. I can't 4 remember the detail of this.</p> <p>5 Q. Can you remember what the text says or is it still 6 available?</p> <p>7 A. Well, they're not my texts. They're my wife's texts. 8 I think you would have to ask her --</p> <p>9 Q. She might have communicated this to you.</p> <p>10 A. -- if you thought it was important. I think it 11 communicated, if I'm right -- and this is all 12 I remember, and I haven't asked for a text to be 13 disclosed but it's your right to ask for them if you 14 need them -- but I think it communicated a feeling about 15 Mr Watson and that was it.</p> <p>16 Q. I don't think the issue is so important we're going to 17 ask to see the text. Anyway, it's on your wife's phone.</p> <p>18 I have been asked to put to you this other question 19 in relation to Mr Watson. In 2006, the media reported 20 that he visited you at your house in Scotland before his 21 resignation. Did you discuss any political matters at 22 all with Mr Watson on that occasion?</p> <p>23 A. No. Our baby had just been born. He was bringing 24 a present for our baby with his wife and his family, and 25 we were talking about children. I mean, if I had known</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 103</p>
<p>1 say that Mrs Brooks had made her feelings about 2 Mr Watson pretty well-known to my wife. That's all the 3 new information I think I brought to this.</p> <p>4 Q. Yes. There may be a misunderstanding. That's why I was 5 trying to tease this out. Did the text message you 6 refer to relate to earlier events or did it relate to 7 phone hacking? Can you remember?</p> <p>8 A. No, this was -- look, News International had taken the 9 view that Tom Watson was to be held culpable for 10 anything that had happened in 2006, I think, and this 11 was still the line that they wanted to pursue.</p> <p>12 I don't want to get involved in this because I don't 13 understand everything that happened. There was a legal 14 case taken about defamation by Mr Watson and for all 15 I know, there are still proceedings -- I don't know, but 16 there was an animosity between News International and 17 Mr Watson, and I was merely reporting to him, when he 18 asked me about these things, that I was well aware that 19 News International had wanted to get rid of him when he 20 was a minister.</p> <p>21 Q. This was because of alleged machinations against 22 Mr Blair, not because of his persistent pursuit of the 23 phone hacking issue; was that correct?</p> <p>24 A. But you are putting words into News International's 25 mouth. I don't know. All I reported to him was that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 102</p>	<p>1 that he was planning any political initiative, I would 2 have told him not to do it, but I knew nothing about it.</p> <p>3 Q. And the follow-up question was: did you discuss 4 Mr Watson's subsequently published round-robin letter 5 calling for Mr Blair's resignation --</p> <p>6 A. I think I've already answered that. If I'd known that 7 he was planning anything like that, I would have told 8 him to desist from this. This was a bad mistake, it was 9 a wrong thing to do, and I told him so once I found out 10 about it, but I didn't find out about it from 11 a conversation with him.</p> <p>12 Q. So your evidence is this was entirely a social call to 13 deliver a present for your baby; is that right?</p> <p>14 A. Entirely, because he had his family with him and they 15 were talking to Sarah and they were talking about -- we 16 were all talking about our children.</p> <p>17 Q. Mr Brown, you called for a judicial inquiry in September 18 2010, in the sense that I think you wrote a letter to 19 Lord O'Donnell. We have it at tab 35.</p> <p>20 A. Yes, I remember.</p> <p>21 Q. Sorry, he was Sir Gus then. Obviously, the context was, 22 although you don't refer to it, the piece in the 23 New York Times which was published on 1 September 2010; 24 is that correct?</p> <p>25 A. Yes, and the report that was being done by the culture</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 104</p>

26 (Pages 101 to 104)

<p>1 and media committee. That was the prompting for -- 2 asking whether something had to be done. 3 Look, we did not know about -- as I said in my 4 speech in the House of Commons about this matter, we did 5 not know about the extent of this phone hacking, and it 6 only gradually became known to me that it could be 7 considerably more than what had been reported and that 8 this rogue hacker or rogue reporter was not a proper 9 defence, but as the information became available and as 10 I realised that this was a bigger issue than people had 11 imagined, it seemed to me we had to look at what needed 12 to be done. 13 Now, the Home Secretary had looked at whether the 14 police investigation should be extended to -- or be 15 carried out by another body. I had to look, given that 16 there was some media speculation at this time that there 17 was a case for a public inquiry, as to whether there was 18 a case for a judicial inquiry. 19 Unfortunately, when I asked Sir Gus O'Donnell to 20 look at this, he did not look at other evidence than 21 simply the report of the Culture Select Committee -- 22 I think that probably was an unfortunate decision -- and 23 therefore we had a report back that basically reflected 24 the minimum amount of information that was available to 25 the Select Committee and said nothing about any further</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 105</p>	<p>1 him at any stage, either before or after his election? 2 A. This letter was independently done by me. I didn't 3 consult anybody before I sent that letter. 4 Q. No, I'm not suggesting that you needed to consult. 5 A. Yes. 6 Q. Did you discuss your concerns about the issue with 7 Mr Miliband? 8 A. I had expressed my concern to a number of people about 9 what was happening, but I can't remember a specific 10 conversation with Mr Miliband. Perhaps there was one, 11 perhaps there wasn't. I did raise it with Mr Clegg, 12 I remember, at one point. 13 Q. Okay. Now may we look to the future, Mr Brown, and 14 recommendations. 15 A. Yes. 16 Q. We know what you said in 2007 and we've seen that 17 speech, the extracts of which you've kindly provided us 18 with. In your witness statement, at page 14212, you set 19 out some ideas for the future. 20 A. Yes. 21 Q. On the internal numbering, it's page 6, which we've 22 carefully considered but can I just pick up some themes 23 on where we are. 24 Statutory backstop. Could you elaborate on that and 25 differentiate between that and state regulation of the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 107</p>
<p>1 information that was actually known within government at 2 the time, including the Home Secretary's examination of 3 this on his own bat. 4 Q. To be fair to Sir Gus, the letter he wrote back to you 5 on 10 September 2010 simply stated that the issue is now 6 under review by the Metropolitan Police and also subject 7 to an inquiry by the standards and prejudicial 8 committee. 9 A. You're talking about the second letter. My first 10 request to him was before we left office. 11 Q. Yes. 12 A. And that was a request that he answer with a memo that 13 I think you now have about the various pros and cons of 14 taking action. It's at that point that I think we might 15 have looked at the other evidence available within 16 government and that's the point I'm making. 17 When I wrote to him in September 2010, it was 18 because further knowledge was available and that is the 19 New York Times -- 20 Q. I'm focusing on the September 2010 issue because, as you 21 rightly say, we've looked carefully with Lord O'Donnell 22 at the March 2010 consideration. 23 Can I ask you this: we know that Mr Miliband was not 24 elected leader of the opposition until I think 25 25 September 2010. Did you discuss these issues with</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 106</p>	<p>1 press? 2 A. Can I just say, by way of introduction to this section, 3 that I would make a distinction between two roles that 4 this Inquiry might have, and indeed the way that further 5 self-regulation or regulation may go. I think there is 6 the issue of dealing with wrongs that have to be 7 righted, redressed for individuals who have a complaint 8 to make, and I've said, I think, pretty clearly in my 9 evidence that I don't think the present system, much as 10 it may be the better part of the complaint commission, 11 the dealing with complaints is satisfactory. 12 The second aspect, however, that I would urge you to 13 look at is not just how we can deter the bad, but how 14 far we can incentivise the good. If I'm right, there is 15 a problem developing in this but also in every advanced 16 country in the world about the quality of journalism and 17 the commercial basis on which it can proceed, and if, in 18 the 19th century, you had big proprietors and if, in the 19 20th century, you had advertising that managed to 20 finance quality journalism, there is a big issue now 21 about what can incentivise or give support to quality 22 journalism in the future. 23 So I would just want to make, by way of 24 introduction, if you're dealing with this, that yes, we 25 can look at a better complaints system -- and you have,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 108</p>

27 (Pages 105 to 108)

1 sir, put on the website I think very, very good
 2 guidelines for how we might proceed in sorting that
 3 issue out, and I believe there will be all-party support
 4 for doing so, and I know that that is important to you,
 5 that there is all-party support -- but I think we have
 6 to look at a second issue, about the quality and
 7 standards of journalism and how that can be improved,
 8 and what we can do to help good journalists actually be
 9 able to survive, based on their ability to sell their
 10 content across the media and not just across newspapers.
 11 That may demand quite radical thinking about how we
 12 incentivise this for the future, including what happens
 13 to the BBC licence fee, what happens to spectrum
 14 auctions and the fees that come from that, and I think
 15 these are all issues. There is going to be a real
 16 problem in the next 20 years about how quality
 17 journalism can flourish.

18 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes. When you made that comment at
 19 the very beginning of your evidence, I wrote in the
 20 margin: "How?" If you can answer that question, even
 21 with some ideas, I will be very interested to hear them.

22 A. I have tried to give some thought to this. When the BBC
 23 was set up in the 1920s and then developed its licence
 24 fee system in the 1940s, it was clear that there was
 25 a market failure. In other words, the finance that was

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1 available for supporting quality broadcast journalism
 2 and quality content was simply not there. There was
 3 a market failure. So it had to be dealt with. Despite
 4 what James Murdoch says in his MacTaggart lecture, it
 5 had to be dealt with by taking action, and the action
 6 which was chosen, which was popular for at least some
 7 time, was the creation of the licence fee. And the
 8 licence fee was to support quality journalism, and of
 9 course, the argument in favour of it was that there were
 10 great extra novelties, if you are an economist -- there
 11 were great benefits from high quality journalism, from
 12 the educational effect of that, from getting trusted
 13 information, and that there was a public good to be
 14 supported that the market itself would not necessarily
 15 support in broadcasting. Then, of course, there were
 16 further benefits, because once you put it on
 17 a broadcaster network, the marginal cost of delivering
 18 it to millions of people as against thousands of people
 19 was minimal.

20 Now, some of these arguments, in my view, now apply
 21 to the Internet. There is a problem about the lack of
 22 quality journalism. Most internal journalism has not
 23 got the resources to be as, if you like, persuasive or
 24 to be as trusted information as you would like it to be.
 25 There is a problem now developing in the newspapers

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1 because their advertising model has collapsed,
 2 basically, and therefore they're finding it more and
 3 more difficult. I mean, every week, I see a local
 4 newspaper going under.

5 So we have a problem about how we finance quality
 6 journalism for the future and there are journalists who
 7 are sitting here today who are in employment today, but
 8 I think the quality journalism that we need and that
 9 they represent for the future will have to find new ways
 10 of financing it.

11 Is the BBC model of any use to us? I think we ought
 12 to look at that. It certainly deals with this issue
 13 that there is a public good that the market cannot
 14 supply, and it certainly deals with the issue about how
 15 you might apply this to the Internet, as well as to
 16 broadcasting, because there is a zero cost in getting to
 17 millions of people once you get to the first thousand of
 18 people, and I would think that if we are genuine in
 19 trying to root out the bad but also trying to encourage
 20 the good, I think we to have to say something about how
 21 quality journalism in this country can be financed,
 22 supported and really sponsored in the future.

23 This is a problem which is even greater in America,
 24 and there's a huge debate now in America about how
 25 quality journalism can survive, and there's some very

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1 good people joining that debate, but all I'm saying,
 2 sir, if you forgive me for doing so, is that you can
 3 deal with this issue about what I think was a terrible
 4 injustice done to the Dowler family, innocent people who
 5 had their rights trampled over, and we need to have
 6 a complaints system that deals with that and we need to
 7 have proper penalties and proper fines for dealing with
 8 that, but we also have to look at how we not just
 9 discourage the bad but encourage the good. And that's
 10 not making a judgment about what's good and bad in
 11 journalism; it's making a judgment that you will need
 12 trained journalist and you will need medias like the
 13 internet to be able to support that in future.

14 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: But one needn't just look at the
 15 journalism of the national newspapers. You've
 16 commented -- and indeed it's been the subject of
 17 evidence -- that local journalism is very much suffering
 18 from the lack of advertising --

19 A. Absolutely.

20 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: -- and the consequence is that local
 21 issues therefore aren't reported as once they were, and
 22 as more newspapers find it difficult to survive, the
 23 loss of local information will be a very serious blow to
 24 the development of local politics, the development of
 25 holding local health boards, local countries to

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1 account --

2 **A. Absolutely.**

3 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: -- because nobody else will report

4 it.

5 **A. This is why I defend the freedom of the press and the**

6 **right of the press to have the powers that they have,**

7 **because without shining the light on potential**

8 **corruption or maladministration or the abuse of power --**

9 **and that's true at a local level as well as at**

10 **a national level -- people get away with doing things in**

11 **an unaccountable manner that are completely**

12 **unacceptable, and that's why you need a local press.**

13 I mean, there was a study done in America about what

14 happened to a town where they were faced with -- I think

15 it was a flooding or something, and because there was no

16 local journalism in place and because the information

17 could not flow properly, then citizens were being

18 deprived of the means by which they could deal with this

19 particular difficulty. This will continue to happen.

20 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: At least one of the witnesses who has

21 given evidence has brought my attention to the

22 development of the concept of free local authority

23 newspapers, which then deprive the independent

24 journalists of an opportunity to investigate their

25 product.

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1 **A. As you know, there's a debate about whether the BBC**

2 **should be in local radio, whether it should simply be**

3 **commercial radio, and how the integration of local**

4 **newspapers with local broadcasting, with local**

5 **television and local radio should happen.**

6 It's clear to me, however, that without some

7 underpinning -- and it may be financial -- then there is

8 a market failure here. There is not enough resources

9 now to support the quality journalism that you are

10 talking about. My own local newspaper has just had its

11 editorial staff merged with the next door newspaper.

12 They're running down the numbers of staff that are

13 providing this local service and I think you would find

14 this in every part of the country that you go into, and

15 more than that, you're finding it all across the world

16 now, because an internet journalist, who is someone

17 who's sort of doing their own, if you like,

18 self-journalism, can put their views up on a screen and

19 put their views across the world, but if they're not

20 resourced and they're not doing proper research and

21 there's no investigative journalism, then we're

22 diminishing the quality of the output that is available

23 to us.

24 So it's not a strict answer to this problem that

25 there's more people communicating on the internet --

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1 that's a good thing -- when you don't have the research

2 that is being done and the investigation that is being

3 done to bring quality journalism.

4 My point to you is that we can deal with the issue

5 of complaints, and I think you have got excellent

6 suggestions and I do applaud what you are trying to move

7 to there, and I would emphasise, when I talk about the

8 Press Complaints Commission, that without an

9 investigative arm, it cannot be successful. The one

10 thing you go to the Press Complaints Commission to get

11 is a judgment on whether something is accurate or not,

12 and when they reply to you, they say, "We cannot make

13 a judgment on the accuracy of these statements", and

14 therefore the one thing you ask them for, they cannot do

15 because they have no investigative arm.

16 That's one thing, but encouraging quality journalism

17 is, I think, something that I hope that in your next set

18 of evidence you might be able to consider.

19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: I'll take that point very, very much

20 on board.

21 **A. I may say I think there's quite a lot to learn from**

22 **America, where this is a live debate.**

23 **Sorry, I moved from the initial point of your**

24 **question about self-regulation.**

25 MR JAY: Not at all. Mr Brown, the Prime Minister, as you

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1 know, has said that the relationship between press and

2 politicians needs to be reset. What, if anything, would

3 you recommend in that regard?

4 **A. There has to be greater openness and transparency, as**

5 **I've said, and I just repeat that.**

6 I don't think -- I do want to answer you previous

7 question about regulation because I think it's

8 important. I've never been one -- and this may sound

9 surprising to people. Despite my discomfort with the

10 press, I've never been one that has favoured heavy

11 regulation or even regulation of the press. I've always

12 looked for solutions that would avoid the idea that

13 there was some form of interference in the press by

14 politicians and I've always been very careful when we've

15 talked about the BBC to make sure that we safeguard the

16 independence of the BBC. So I start from this -- I said

17 before it was a religious upbringing but the idea that

18 people should be able to speak truth to power and the

19 idea that the individual conscience is respected, free

20 from state power, is very important to me.

21 Now, what do you do in circumstances where you have

22 a recalcitrant newspaper which will not join the Press

23 Complaints Commission? This is a problem which I know,

24 sir, you face. What do you do in circumstances where

25 you have a Press Complaints Commission that actually is

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<p>1 not able to deal and has proved itself unable to deal</p> <p>2 with these big issues?</p> <p>3 In Ireland and Australia and New Zealand, they have</p> <p>4 found a way to do -- I think in one case they call it</p> <p>5 statutory underpinning, is recognised in legislation but</p> <p>6 not --</p> <p>7 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: That's the Irish method.</p> <p>8 A. -- not decreed by legislation, so I think there is a way</p> <p>9 but I think we have less to fear from the proposals that</p> <p>10 you're talking about, about a statutory underpinning,</p> <p>11 than people think, and certainly if there are</p> <p>12 recalcitrant members of the press who are not prepared</p> <p>13 to join, I think your case is strengthened.</p> <p>14 But I share your views that this has to be</p> <p>15 independent of the politicians, it has to be independent</p> <p>16 of -- but it also has to be independent of the newspaper</p> <p>17 editors. It has to be independent of both and it has to</p> <p>18 be genuinely looked to and trusted as a source of fair</p> <p>19 and balanced investigations and judgments.</p> <p>20 MR JAY: Mr Brown, those are all the questions I had.</p> <p>21 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Mr Brown, thank you very much. It's</p> <p>22 all very easy to say; rather more difficult to seek to</p> <p>23 achieve it, but thank you very much indeed for your</p> <p>24 assistance.</p> <p>25 A. I don't envy your job, but I know you're doing a great</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 117</p>	<p>1 what's coming, I don't think this is going to take you</p> <p>2 by surprise.</p> <p>3 A. I don't know what's coming but I'm happy to take the</p> <p>4 question.</p> <p>5 Questions by MR DAVIES</p> <p>6 Q. Mr Brown, my name is Rhodri Davies. I appear for News</p> <p>7 International.</p> <p>8 A. Yes, I understood that.</p> <p>9 Q. I think you're probably familiar with this. It's behind</p> <p>10 tab 8 of your bundle. If you'd like to go to it,</p> <p>11 it's ...</p> <p>12 A. Tab 8 of my bundle?</p> <p>13 Q. Yes.</p> <p>14 A. The new bundle or the old one?</p> <p>15 Q. That's a transcript of the evidence that Lord Mandelson</p> <p>16 gave.</p> <p>17 A. What day is it referring to, please?</p> <p>18 Q. It's 21 May.</p> <p>19 A. What day?</p> <p>20 Q. Day 74.</p> <p>21 A. No, what day is Mr Mandelson referring to? He was</p> <p>22 referring to a call that took place when?</p> <p>23 Q. He was. He was asked about whether or not there was</p> <p>24 a call between you and Mr Murdoch shortly after the Sun</p> <p>25 had announced that it was no longer going to support the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 119</p>
<p>1 job.</p> <p>2 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Thank you.</p> <p>3 Oh, one moment, Mr Brown. Yes?</p> <p>4 MR DAVIES: It relates, I'm afraid, to the disputed call</p> <p>5 between Mr Brown and Mr Murdoch.</p> <p>6 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Yes?</p> <p>7 MR DAVIES: The position is you may recall that</p> <p>8 Lord Mandelson gave some evidence about that. Mr Brown</p> <p>9 hasn't addressed that and I think he ought to be given</p> <p>10 the opportunity to deal with it, or at least, we would</p> <p>11 like to know what he says about it.</p> <p>12 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Do you want to put what</p> <p>13 Lord Mandelson said? Do you have it to hand?</p> <p>14 MR DAVIES: Yes, I have.</p> <p>15 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Then by all means, let Mr Brown</p> <p>16 respond.</p> <p>17 A. Anybody else who wants to put questions as well, I don't</p> <p>18 know.</p> <p>19 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: No, no. The position is, Mr Brown,</p> <p>20 that the system permits core participants to put</p> <p>21 questions through counsel and Mr Jay, I think, several</p> <p>22 times has said, "I've been asked to ask this question",</p> <p>23 and that's how he's done it, but if he declines to put</p> <p>24 a question, then the core participants are entitled to</p> <p>25 ask me for permission to ask the question. As I know</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 118</p>	<p>1 Labour Party on 30 September 2009, I think it was.</p> <p>2 A. Mm.</p> <p>3 Q. This is Day 74 in the afternoon.</p> <p>4 A. I find this very difficult to read because of the light</p> <p>5 type here. Perhaps you can just read out the section</p> <p>6 that's relevant.</p> <p>7 Q. I will do that.</p> <p>8 A. I'm grateful.</p> <p>9 Q. The questions are from Mr Jay:</p> <p>10 "Question: "The allegation is, or rather the</p> <p>11 evidence was from Mr Murdoch that Mr Brown said or</p> <p>12 uttered the words 'declare war on News International' or</p> <p>13 words to that effect. From your own knowledge,</p> <p>14 Lord Mandelson, can you assist us as to whether there</p> <p>15 was such a call?</p> <p>16 "Answer: Well, I wasn't on the call. I hadn't been</p> <p>17 patched into the call.</p> <p>18 "Question: No, of course not.</p> <p>19 "Answer: I assumed that there was the call because</p> <p>20 I seem to remember the Prime Minister telling me that</p> <p>21 Rupert Murdoch was not at all happy with the method and</p> <p>22 timing of James and Rebekah's action.</p> <p>23 "Question: What did the Prime Minister tell you,</p> <p>24 Lord Mandelson, about the call? Did he communicate to</p> <p>25 you that's what he told Mr Murdoch?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 120</p>

<p>1 "Answer: No, he didn't say that. He told me what 2 Mr Murdoch had said to him. 3 "Question: So there was nothing about what Mr Brown 4 said to Mr Murdoch; is that your evidence? 5 "Answer: Yes, it is. I cannot remember being told 6 by Mr Brown what he said, and I have no way of knowing, 7 but I know -- but I know what he said to me about 8 Rupert Murdoch's reaction, which was to say, basically: 9 'I don't like how it's been done and I think it's a bad 10 day to do it and I wouldn't have done it this way 11 myself, but that's life and we have to get on with it.' 12 "Question: Mr Murdoch's reaction to what, though, 13 Lord Mandelson? 14 "Answer: The decision of the Sun to switch support 15 from New Labour to the Conservative Party, which he has 16 said, if I recall correctly, was James and Rebekah's 17 decision, not the editor's, incidentally." 18 A. First of all, there was only one call with Mr Murdoch, 19 and it was on November 10, and that was a call that was 20 related to Afghanistan and you have five letters that 21 are affidavits from people who were on that call -- four 22 of them on that call, one of whom who had to report to 23 the press what happened afterwards -- and they make it 24 absolutely clear that that call was about Afghanistan. 25 Whatever you're reading out, and whether you are Page 121</p>	<p>1 he said that you had in the evidence I've just read to 2 you? 3 A. I don't remember a conversation with Mr Mandelson about 4 this specifically, but if a conversation took place, it 5 would have been about a call on November 10, and it was 6 nothing to do with the support of the Conservative 7 Party; it was about support for Afghanistan. There was 8 no call on September 30. You're allowing me the chance 9 to make this absolutely clear, and News International 10 have produced not one shred of evidence that a call took 11 place, not one date for the call or time for the call. 12 You're not able to tell us what happened, except you 13 have these statements from Mr Murdoch that this 14 happened, and I do find it very strange that we're being 15 asked to debate a call that never took place, for which 16 you have no information about when it took place and 17 where Mr Murdoch was at the time and who was also on the 18 call. 19 MR DAVIES: Thank you very much, Mr Brown. 20 LORD JUSTICE LEVESON: Thank you. Thank you. 21 Mr Brown, thank you very much indeed. 22 (1.09 pm) 23 (The luncheon adjournment) 24 25 Page 123</p>
<p>1 referring to that call I don't know, but the November 10 2 call is the only call I had in a year with Mr Murdoch. 3 I don't know if you're in a position to confirm that 4 that is the case on behalf of News International or not. 5 As for what happened on September 30, when the 6 Conservative Party was given the imprimatur, if you 7 like, of the Sun, there was no call. There was no 8 discussion, there was no text, there was no conversation 9 with Mr Murdoch at all, and I don't know how -- I notice 10 that questions have come in from core participants, and 11 the suggestion is that somehow there was a mobile call 12 that hasn't been registered in Downing Street. I really 13 think News International is doing itself a great deal of 14 harm by trying to suggest that a telephone call took 15 place which never happened, and trying to suggest that 16 comments were made on that call that never were made, 17 and trying to suggest also that the attitude of the 18 person on the call was unbalanced when there was no call 19 at all. 20 So you must tell me whether you want to refer to 21 a call that was made on November 10, or a call that you 22 are claiming was made after September 30 which never 23 happened. 24 Q. Mr Brown, the only question I want to ask you is this: 25 did you have the conversation with Lord Mandelson that</p> Page 122	

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